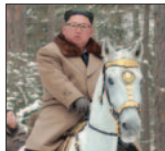


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FRANCISCO SECO/AP

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg, center front left, speaks with President Donald Trump after a group photo at a NATO leaders meeting at The Grove hotel and resort in Watford, Hertfordshire, England, on Wednesday.

IMPEACHMENT

Heated hearing begins in Judiciary

By LISA MASCARO
AND MARY CLARE JALONICK
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The House Judiciary Committee's first impeachment hearing quickly burst into partisan infighting Wednesday as Democrats charged that President Donald Trump must be removed from office for enlisting foreign interference in U.S. elections and Republicans angrily retorted there were no grounds for such drastic action.

The panel responsible for drafting articles of impeachment convened as Trump's team was fanning out across Capitol Hill. Vice President Mike Pence met behind closed doors with House Republicans, and Senate Republicans were to huddle with the White House counsel as GOP lawmakers stand with the president and Democrats charge headlong into what has become a one-party drive to impeach him.

Chairman Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y., gavelled open the hearing saying, "The facts before us are undisputed."

Nadler said Trump's phone call with Ukraine's president last July wasn't the first time Trump sought a foreign power to influence American elections, after Russian interference in 2016, and if left unchecked he could do it again in next year's campaign.

"We cannot wait for the election to address the present crisis," Nadler said. "The president has shown us his pattern of conduct. If we do not act to hold him in check now, President Trump will almost certainly try again to solicit interference in the election for his personal political gain."

Republicans protested the proceedings as unfair to the president.

SEE HEARING ON PAGE 9

NATO touts progress amid rifts

Allies approve Baltic defense plan while trumpeting higher spending

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

President Donald Trump and fellow NATO leaders approved a defense plan for the Baltics and Poland on Wednesday, overcoming resistance from Turkey, which had threatened to block it unless other alliance members designated Kurdish fighters in Syria as terrorists.

Speaking at the end of two days of talks in London, Trump heaped praise on Turkey when asked about the Baltic defense plan.

While there are conflicting views within the alliance over Ankara's invasion of northern Syria and its plan for containing Islamic State, Trump offered support.

"Frankly, a lot of people have great respect for Turkey for the work that they've done," Trump said.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said allied leaders didn't discuss the Kurdish YPG militia before passing a revised defense plan for the Baltics and Poland. Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda said in a statement that the agreement was a "huge

achievement not only for our country, but for the whole region."

Although NATO managed to take steps forward in London, there was acrimony among some of its leaders.

Trump and French President Emmanuel Macron traded barbs at the start of talks Tuesday, and later that evening Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was captured on tape, purportedly poking fun at Trump's lengthy news conferences as he chatted with

SEE NATO ON PAGE 8

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Google co-founders step aside

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Google's co-founders are relinquishing their executive positions just as state and federal regulators, not to mention the Department of Justice and Congress, are taking a keen interest in possible abuse of its privacy practices and market power.

But their long-foreshadowed successor, Sundar Pichai, has been well-prepped to serve as the

public face of the company in addition to his current role as chief executive.

Larry Page and Sergey Brin are stepping down as CEO and president, respectively, of Google parent company Alphabet.

The move caps more than two decades during which the pair have shepherded the one-time startup they founded in a Silicon Valley garage.

Pichai, who has been Google's

CEO since 2015, will now also head up Alphabet. The company isn't filling Brin's position.

Google is facing increasing criticism and investigations from authorities in the U.S. and Europe about its privacy policies and nature of its many-legged business. That will now fall to Pichai to wrangle and push through — though Brin and Page, both 46, have noticeably backed out of the spotlight already.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates		Commercial rates	
Euro costs (Dec. 5)	\$1.1384	Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3770
Euro buys (Dec. 5)	60.8784	British pound	\$1.3097
British pound (Dec. 5)	\$1.34	Canada (Dollar)	1.3265
Japanese yen (DATE)	105.00	China (Yuan)	7.0496
South Korean won (DATE)	1,162.00	Denmark (Krone)	6.7272
		Egypt (Pound)	16.1224
		Hong Kong (Dollar)	\$1.1106/0.9004
		Hungary (Forint)	7.8294
		Israel (Shekel)	28.11
		Japan (Yen)	3.7403
		Kuwait (Dinar)	108.72
		Norway (Krone)	0.3036
		Philippines (Peso)	9.1612
		Poland (Zloty)	50.98
		Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.85
		Singapore (Dollar)	3.7499
		South Korea (Won)	1,190.23
		Switzerland (Franc)	0.9870
		Thailand (Baht)	30.30
		Turkey (Lira)	5.7468

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	4.75
Discount rate	2.25
Federal funds market rate	1.56
3-month bill	1.53
30-year bond	2.16

WEATHER OUTLOOK

THURSDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



THURSDAY IN EUROPE



FRIDAY IN THE PACIFIC



The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

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MILITARY

Accountability sought in base housing crisis

By ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

Senators expressed outrage Tuesday over the lack of accountability among military and business leaders who oversee base housing amid continuing complaints of poor living condition for military families.

"There's got to be somebody who can be held accountable here in what looks like endemic non-enforcement," said Sen. Angus King, I-Maine, who was frustrated that private companies were not forced to hold up their end of the deal. "I want somebody who can be fired."

The Senate Armed Services Committee last heard from the military's top brass in March on their plans to fix problems such as mold and vermin infestations, lead paint exposure and substandard maintenance that plague on-base housing.

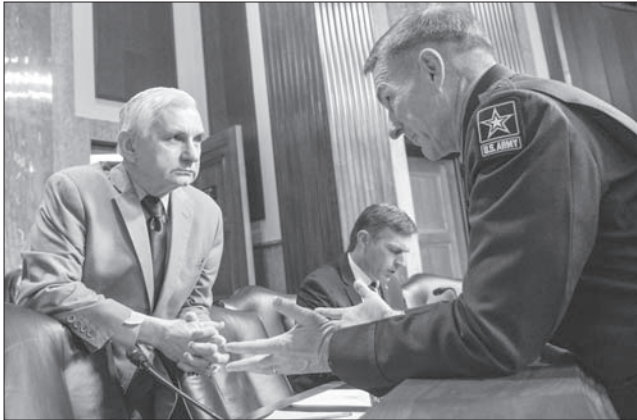
Tuesday's hearing, the Senate committee's third on the subject this year, was meant to garner an update on fixing the problems. But progress has been disappointing, Sen. James Inhofe, R-Okla., the committee chairman, said in his opening statement.

"We continue to hear regularly from families across the country about questionable practices, poor workmanship and about housing contractors not caring about the families they're supposed to be serving," he said. "When is enough enough?"

Since the Senate's March hearing with military leaders, and three service secretaries, the committee has held two hearings. At Tuesday's hearing, Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy, acting Navy Secretary Thomas Modly and Air Force Secretary Barbara Barrett sat alongside their service chiefs, the commandant of the Marines and a representative from the Government Accountability Office. For two hours, committee members pressed them on housing solutions, with an emphasis on how to hold someone accountable for allowing such poor conditions.

In McCarthy's opening statement, he said one-third of housing on Army bases is rated in poor condition and needs to be replaced, one-third is considered in good condition and the rest falls in between.

At Keesler Air Force Base in



JOE GROOME/Stars and Stripes

Army Chief of Staff Gen. James C. McConville talks with Senate Armed Services Committee Ranking Member Jack Reed, D-R.I., before a hearing on privatized military housing Tuesday on Capitol Hill.

Mississippi, where all housing had to be replaced after Hurricane Katrina in 2005, 1,084 of its 1,188 homes have experienced moisture and mold, primarily because of a mistake made while installing air conditioning units and ducts, said Sen. Roger Wicker, R-Miss.

Six months after the last hearing, Sen. Tim Kaine, D-Va., said maintenance crews tried to reuse moldy insulation during remediation of a house at Fort Belvoir, Va.

"[The management companies] all operate in the private sphere and compete hard," Kaine said. Then they "treat military tenants like they're captives, like a captive audience."

Root of the problem

Though contracts, most spanning 50 years, require management companies to meet federal and state housing standards, service secretaries were quiet when King asked who within their ranks is responsible for making certain those guidelines are met.

"Is the problem the contracts

or the enforcement of the contracts?" King asked.

"I think it's both," said Elizabeth Field, director of defense capabilities and management with the Government Accountability Office, who testified based on a report released Tuesday that she authored on military housing privatization. "In many cases, the contracts were not written in such a way that the services could truly hold the partners accountable for everything they should be holding them accountable for."

Sen. Tammy Duckworth, D-Ill., expressed concern that no garrison commander, an officer who typically functions like the base's mayor, had been fired as a result of not holding private companies accountable at their base.

"If you had a tank gunnery range, an aerial gunnery range or a door gunnery range that was constantly hurting the troops operating at that range, and that range was not up to standard, that garrison commander would be held responsible for whether or not they held responsible whatever contractor was running that range for you and keeping it safe.

So I don't understand why not a single garrison commander has yet been fired over a failure to maintain these standards," Duckworth said, garnering applause from the military families who filled the committee room.

Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., pointed his blame toward the private companies, asking if any criminal charges have been referred related to housing. While McCarthy and Modly said no, Barrett said the FBI and the Air Force Office of Special Investigations are looking into instances of fraud reported by the media.

"Some housing issues invite concern about possible allegations that some owners manipulated data to increase their incentive awards," Barrett said in her opening statement.

"I'm deeply disappointed that there has been no such referral," Blumenthal said before thanking Barrett for opening an investigation.

Stalled bill of rights

Senators and military leaders agreed that tackling housing

problems would be much easier should Congress pass the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2020 and the appropriations spending bill for the Defense Department. Both bills are held up as the parties squabble over spending money to build a wall along the U.S. border with Mexico.

Until an agreement is reached, certain aspects of improving housing are stuck in limbo — including the Tenant Bill of Rights created as a collaboration between the three service secretaries and Congress.

"When the bill of rights is published, dispute resolution is one [right], in particular, we need to put in place as quickly as possible," McCarthy said. "It's why in many cases that the only mechanism that families have to get results is legal action. The sooner [we] can have a dispute resolution in place, it will help improve matters dramatically."

Some military families have decided they cannot wait for the bill of rights to offer them dispute resolution. Instead, they have chosen to hire attorneys to file lawsuits against the private housing management companies. So far, at least four multifamily lawsuits have been filed in federal courts across the country.

"I thought there was a lot of passing the buck," Tampa-based attorney Natalie Khawam said about the Senate hearing Tuesday. Khawam is representing five families suing a private housing company because of mold in their residences at MacDill Air Force Base in Florida. She attended the hearing with three military spouses involved in the lawsuit, which was filed Monday.

Khawam said she anticipates hearing different responses Thursday when leaders from five private management companies testify before the House Armed Services Committee about the military housing crisis.

"At the end of the day, I don't care whether you're part of the contract or the military, if people come to you with a problem, you've got to fix it. If you don't do anything about it, you're part of the problem," she said. "The job was just not done."

thayer.rose@stripes.com
Twitter: @RoseL10r

Charges dropped against most Marines arrested at morning formation

By ANDREW DYER

The San Diego Union-Tribune

CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. — Military prosecutors dropped human trafficking and drug charges against most of the two dozen Marines recently arrested in front of their Camp Pendleton battalion, days after a court ruled those arrests were an unlawful violation of their rights, Marine Corps officials confirmed Tuesday.

The Marines' cases will be dealt with administratively, inside the military court system, according to a 1st Marine Division statement. Many of them will be

discharged from the Marines.

"Thirteen Marines submitted and have approved pretrial agreements requesting separation in lieu of courts-martial or waiving administrative separation boards," the Marines statement said.

Also, six Marines have pleaded guilty to courts-martial, and four still face criminal charges, the statement said.

Until now, the Marines had not answered questions or responded to requests for information about the cases.

On July 25, 16 Marines were called to the front of their unit — 1st Battalion, 5th Marines — and accused of human smuggling. They were arrested by a swarm of 40 to 50 law enforcement agents and marched away in handcuffs.

Another eight Marines suspected of unspecified drug offenses also were taken out of formation. Some of them were detained by battalion personnel and taken to the Camp Pendleton brig, Lt. Col. Eric Olson, the battalion commander, said during testimony at a court hearing Nov. 15.

Marines in the formation that day testified at the hearing that their commanders called the accused Marines a "cancer" on the battalion.

The cases against the Marines fell apart

after that hearing. The judge ruled the mass arrest — conducted in front of an 800-person battalion — was an unlawful violation of their rights, attorneys involved in two of the cases said.

Marine Capt. Charles Whitman, who represents a Marine charged with drug offenses, successfully argued that the arrests amounted to unlawful command influence.

"After that ruling, I think the government saw the writing on the wall and wanted to get this out of the court system," Whitman said in an interview Tuesday.

MIDEAST

GAO: 102 bases at risk of facing water shortages

Report criticizes Pentagon's data collection

By COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — More than 100 U.S. military installations face water shortage risks, according to the Government Accountability Office, which warned that the Pentagon needs better standards for monitoring and determining the bases that could be affected.

The federal watchdog cautioned in its Nov. 27 report that bases in the United States had already experienced water shortages that affected critical operations and said more installations were likely to be affected by climate change-related issues and increasing severe weather events.

In all, GAO listed 102 military locations in the United States as vulnerable, noting the Defense Department relies on billions of gallons of water to operate — some 84 billion gallons in fiscal year 2018.

The Pentagon defines water scarcity as a lack of enough water to meet needs for a wide range of critical missions on installations including military training, weapons testing, firefighting and providing drinking water, hygiene and sanitation services.

Vulnerable installations stretched from Naval Air Station Key West in Florida to Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Washington state, Mountain Home Air Force Base in Idaho, Francis E. Warren Air Force Base in Wyoming and Marine Corps Air Station Yuma in Arizona have experienced some level of water shortage in recent years, the GAO reported.

The new report also examined a trio of assessments conducted this year by the Office of the Secretary of Defense on energy- and climate-related issues. The Pentagon looked at water supply issues at its properties and compared results with similar studies conducted separately since 2017 by the three military departments.

The evaluations often did not match, the GAO reported. Only 42 bases of 95 identified by the Pentagon were considered at risk of water scarcity in more than one of the three OSD reports and the three separate military department assessments. The GAO blamed the OSD, criticizing its data collections practices as not following the same standard for analysis the departments of the Army, Air Force and Navy followed.

"When comparing the results of six [OSD] and military depart-

By the numbers

84B

Gallons of water the Defense Department used in fiscal year 2018.

43

Military bases identified by the GAO as facing drought.

SOURCE: Associated Press

ment assessments on installations found that water scarcity, GAO found that they varied markedly, raising questions about their quality and about which source of information DOD is using to determine which installations are vulnerable to water scarcity," the report reads. "... GAO found that these assessments did not reflect four of five leading practices for identifying and analyzing water scarcity — practices that contribute to a reliable assessment of water availability."

Specifically, the GAO reported, the OSD did not always identify how much water was currently available at its installations and how much water was expected to be available in the future or take into account all sources of water available to those posts or identify the precise locations it examined.

Installations can face water shortages for a variety of reasons. In January, the Defense Department identified threats of flooding, drought and wildfires among the top issues that could lead to water shortages.

The GAO identified installations facing drought — as many as 43 bases — as those most vulnerable. Those bases included Marine Corps Air Station Yuma in Arizona, Kirtland Air Force Base in New Mexico and several California installations, including the Marines' Camp Pendleton, Naval Amphibious Base Coronado and Vandenberg Air Force Base.

The GAO said Pentagon officials agreed to its recommendation to implement better practices for assessing water shortage vulnerabilities and conduct a new, departmentwide analysis.

dickstein.corey@starsandstripes.com
Twitter: @CDicksteinDC



ALASTAIR GRANT/AP

Wrapping up the donation season

First lady Melania Trump joins students and U.S. Marines stationed at the U.S. Embassy in wrapping presents to be donated at the Salvation Army Clapton Center in London on Wednesday.

Navy launches site to assist sailors' assignment process

By CAITLIN M. KENNEY
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Navy has changed how sailors search and apply for billets with the upcoming launch of MyNavy Assignment on Thursday, the service announced.

The website is replacing the Navy's Career Management System-Interactive. Detailing website, with more search features and transparency in the assignment process, according to a news release Tuesday from the Navy's personnel command.

"We based these changes on sailor input from around the Navy," Rear Adm. Rick Cheeseman, director of the Career Management Department at Navy Personnel Command, said in a statement. "As we continue to transform our Navy, our goal to increase transparency, flexibility and choice for all sailors and MyNavy Assignment is a huge step in the right direction."

Enlisted sailors who are looking for their next job in their Navy career can work with a "detailer" who considers their goals and available openings across the service. The website will function as a "detailing marketplace," where sailors can search for vacant jobs in the Navy as well as future opportunities. It will have an improved look, according to the Navy.

Sailors in the reserves will see the changes in future updates but no timeline was given.

Last week, during an online town hall event, Vice Adm. John Nowell, chief of naval personnel, highlighted the transparency in the billet process on the

new website.

"Let me assure you, there is no secret list of billets ...," Nowell said. "We're going to show you all the billets. We are going to prioritize what's most important and they will get filled first. But you can go in and you can bookmark billets so that you follow them over successive cycles."

The push for a new career management website is from the Navy's Sailor 2025 initiative, which includes modernizing the personnel system and improving user experience, according to the Navy.

"We know that you want more visibility, you want transparency, you want flexibility and options. We think that we can meet that need, and that we can do that while giving a better fit for the Navy, which is better readiness," Nowell said.

On MyNavy Assignments, sailors can submit seven applications, up from five, and track the status of those applications.

The website will also have a resume feature. Potentially interested commands and detailers can also view the information listed on their resume.

Sailors interested in other job fields will be able to see where their skills and experience match.

"It's also going to have something called a commonality matrix, so that as you look at what's common between your rating and perhaps if you're looking at other ratings that you might want to cross convert to, you can see where you would have the most luck doing that," Nowell said last week.

kenney.caitlin@starsandstripes.com
Twitter: @caitlinmkenney

Okinawans sue over noise at bases

By AYA ICHIHASHI
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Neighbors of two U.S. air bases on Okinawa have filed new lawsuits seeking compensation from the Japanese government for physical and mental damage from aircraft noise, according to local media reports.

Two suits, both filed Saturday, seek \$1.8 million in compensation: \$1.16 million for 110 residents around Kadena Air Base and \$642,000 for 102 residents near Marine Corps Air Station Futenma.

A spokesperson for the Okinawa Defense Bu-

reau, an arm of the Japan Ministry of Defense, said it had not yet received the complaint and declined comment. A plaintiff's lawyer was unavailable for comment.

In April, the Fukuoka High Court Naga Branch reduced by \$3 million a \$22.6 million award in a similar suit involving MCAS Futenma and dismissed the plaintiffs' demand to halt flight operations there.

A separate lawsuit filed in 2018 by 2,800 residents near Futenma seeks \$10 million in damages and is still pending.

ichihashi.aya@starsandstripes.com
Twitter: @AyaIchihashi

PACIFIC

N. Korea lashes out at US threat of force

By KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea lashed out Wednesday at President Donald Trump's threat to use military force if necessary to achieve denuclearization, warning that "the use of armed forces is not the privilege of the U.S. only."

Trump called on North Korean leader Kim Jong Un on Tuesday to live up to promises to rid his country of nuclear weapons.

"Now, we have the most powerful military we ever had, and we are by far the most powerful country in the world, and hopefully we don't have to use it," Trump told reporters at the NATO summit in London. "But if we do, we'll use it."

Those remarks drew a sharp response from Pak Jong Chon, the chief of the general staff of North Korea's army, who said he and Kim Jong Un were "displeased" to hear Trump's comments.

"One thing I would like to make clear is that the use of armed forces is not the privilege of the U.S. only," Pak said. "I clearly state here that if the U.S. uses any armed forces against (North Korea), we will also take prompt corresponding actions at any level."

North Korea and the United States "are still technically at war and the state of truce can turn into an all-out armed conflict any moment even by an accidental case," he said in a statement published by the state-run Korean Central News Agency.

Both sides have ratcheted up their rhetoric as nuclear talks remain stalled ahead of an end-of-year deadline imposed by North Korea for Washington to offer concessions such as sanctions relief and security guarantees.



KOREAN CENTRAL NEWS AGENCY, KOREA NEWS SERVICE/AP

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and his wife Ri Sol Ju ride horses during a visit to Mount Paektu in a photo released by North Korea on Wednesday. North Korea says Kim has taken a second ride on a white horse to the sacred mountain in less than two months. In past years such visits have been harbingers of major policy shifts.

Trump has frequently touted his friendship with the North Korean leader as progress, despite a resurgence of weapons tests by the communist state in recent months.

On Tuesday, however, the president reverted to using his nickname "rocket man" for the North Korean leader, while insisting they maintain a "very good relationship."

Kim "likes sending rockets up, doesn't he? That's why I call him 'rocket man,'" Trump said.

Trump spoke hours after the North said it was preparing a "Christmas gift" for the United States if Washington fails to offer a more flexible stance in talks, which stalled after a second summit in Vietnam in February. The North demanded extensive sanctions relief but the Trump administration said it must first give up more of its nuclear weapons program.

In London, Trump called on Kim to stick to his promise to denuclearize. Many analysts have expressed concern that the two sides may return to traded threats and long-range missile tests that pushed the Korean Peninsula to the brink of another war in 2017.

The comments came hours after the North released photos of leader Kim visiting a sacred mountain on horseback for the second time in two months.

In past years such visits have been harbingers of major policy shifts. Pyongyang also announced that it will convene a rare meeting of senior ruling Working Party officials later this month, signaling a major announcement may be in the works as the deadline to resume talks nears.

North Korea has conducted several weapons tests since May, but it has stopped short of lifting its self-imposed moratorium on intercontinental ballistic missile or nuclear tests.

Some 28,500 American troops are based in South Korea.

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WAR ON TERRORISM



Silkey Knadle

Chief Warrant Officer 2 David C. Knadle; his wife, Silkey; daughter, Starling; and son, Eason Bertones, reunite in Fort Hood, Texas, in July 2018, after the Army pilot finished a rotation in Germany. Knadle died Nov. 20 in Afghanistan when his helicopter crashed.

Apache pilot 'gladly and willingly' accepted risks of deployment

By J.P. LAWRENCE
Stars and Stripes

Five-year-old Starling Knadle sat on her mother's lap, her 15-year-old brother sitting beside her wearing a cavalry Stetson, as six Army pallbearers loaded their father's coffin into a waiting hearse during a ceremony at Fort Hood, Texas, on Tuesday.

Chief Warrant Officer 2 David C. Knadle, 33, was killed last month when his attack helicopter crashed while on a mission providing security for ground troops in eastern Afghanistan.

After the dignified transfer of the Apache pilot's remains, his daughter insisted she be allowed to put on her father's dog tags, her mother said in a phone interview Wednesday.

"We talked about Daddy and his big muscles," Silkey Knadle said — he had recently placed second in a bodybuilding competition. "She said her daddy is an angel in heaven with the biggest muscles and the biggest wings."

The Texas native and his copilot on the fatal mission, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Kirk T. Fuchigami Jr., 25, of Keaau, Hawaii, had been assigned to the 1st Cavalry Division. Both members of 1st Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade were posthumously awarded Bronze Stars.

David Knadle "could do anything," Silkey Knadle said. "And if he didn't know how to do it, he could figure it out."

The two met while working at a financial firm in Fort Worth, Texas. Both had high-paying jobs, but he told her his dream was to become a pilot.

"You're not getting younger," Silkey Knadle recalled telling him. "If you're going to do it, do it now."

He joined the Army in 2013. Two years later, he was a pilot and had started a family that by

then included their infant daughter, Starling, and his wife's son, Eason Bertone.

An avid athlete who began competitive bodybuilding shortly before his death, Knadle had bonded with Eason through rock climbing. He often teased that he wanted to toughen up Starling, but with tickles and kisses, his wife said.

This fall, despite having orders to Colorado, he made a deal with a friend so he could deploy to Afghanistan, his wife said.

Never a person to shy away from a fight, "he knew the enemy was still there and active and looked forward to meeting them in person," said his friend, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Travis Schroder.

"He knew when he strapped on the machine, exactly what it meant and the dangers that came with it," Schroder said. "He accepted these gladly and willingly."

He deployed in October and flew his final mission the following month. Officials are investigating the Nov. 20 crash in Logar province that killed him and Fuchigami, a newlywed, the Pentagon said last month.

The Taliban, who often fabricate or embellish reports of their battlefield exploits, claimed to have shot down the helicopter, but Afghan officials said the downing was not caused by enemy fire.

The aviators' deaths brought to 19 the number of Americans killed in Afghanistan so far this year, which has been the deadliest for U.S. forces since the end of major combat operations in the country in December 2014. More than 2,400 American troops have died in the country since the 2001 U.S.-led invasion launched in response to the 9/11 attacks.

A funeral for Knadle will be held on Thursday at Vista Community Church in Temple, Texas.

lawrence.jp@stripes.com
Twitter: @jplawrence3

US peace envoy in Kabul seeking to launch talks

By KATHY GANNON
Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — Washington's special peace envoy, Zalmay Khalilzad, was in the Afghan capital, Kabul, on Wednesday to launch an "accelerated effort" to get Afghans on both sides of the protracted conflict to the negotiation table to plot a road map to a post-war Afghanistan.

His next stop will be Doha in the Middle East where he will restart talks with the Taliban, according to a U.S. State Department statement. The talks would be the first official round since September, when President Donald Trump declared an all-but-done deal dead after a surge in violence killed 12 people in the capital, including a U.S. soldier.

In Kabul on Wednesday, Khalil-

zad met with several Afghan leaders and insisted President Ashraf Ghani, who repeated his call for a cease-fire.

Hekmat Karzai, chairman of the Kabul-based Center for Conflict and Peace Studies, tweeted photographs of his meeting Wednesday with Khalilzad in Kabul, saying they "spoke about the way forward."

A Taliban official said the group has held informal talks with the Americans, without specifying where or who participated. He spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the talks.

Khalilzad's visit comes just days after Trump visited U.S. troops in Afghanistan for the Thanksgiving holiday, when he hinted at a resumption of peace talks with the Taliban.

Trump said the U.S. and Tal-

iban have been engaged in talks and insisted the Taliban want to make a deal after heavy U.S. fire in recent months.

The State Department statement said Khalilzad's Kabul and Doha talks are a follow-up to Trump's recent visit and to discuss how best to support accelerated efforts to get all parties to intra-Afghan negotiations.

In Doha, Khalilzad will be pushing for a cease-fire or at least a reduction in violence with an eye to an eventual end to fighting.

The Taliban official said the U.S. has been pressing for a cease-fire, even a temporary one during the time of an agreement signing. While there has been no formal announcement of a reduction in violence, Taliban attacks at least in the cities appear to have decreased in recent weeks.

Japanese doctor killed in attack

Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — A shooting ambush in eastern Afghanistan on Wednesday killed a Japanese physician and aid worker widely respected and beloved in the war-scarred nation, triggering an outpouring of grief among the people whose lives he helped change for the better.

The leaders of Japan and Afghanistan expressed their condemnations of the attack that took the life of Tetsu Nakamura and also killed five Afghans, including the doctor's bodyguards, the driver and a passenger, hospital spokesman Gulzad Sanger said. Nakamura, 73, had worked in the eastern Nangarhar province for more than a decade, taking the lead in water projects in rural



Nakamura

areas, which earned him the nickname "Uncle Murad" for his services to the people. Afghan President Ashraf Ghani

awarded him honorary Afghan citizenship in April.

Nakamura died of his wounds shortly after gunmen opened fire on his car Wednesday morning on a road in Nangarhar. According to the provincial governor's spokesman, Attallah Khogyani, Nakamura was heading to the provincial capital, Jalalabad, when the attack took place.

He was critically wounded and underwent surgery at a local hospital but died while being airlifted to the Bagram Airfield hospital in the capital, Kabul, said Sanger.

Nakamura had headed the Japanese charity Peace Medical Service in Nangarhar since 2008. He came to Afghanistan after a Japanese colleague, Kazuya Ito, was abducted and killed.

Nakamura was credited with changing a vast desert stretch in Nangarhar known as Gamber to lush forests and productive wheat farmlands.

The Taliban quickly denied responsibility for Wednesday's shooting that killed Japanese Dr. Tetsu Nakamura, as well as five Afghans, including the doctor's bodyguards, the driver and a passenger.

Court hears war crimes probe appeal

Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands — The International Criminal Court opened a three-day hearing Wednesday at which prosecutors and victims aim to overturn a decision scrapping a proposed investigation into alleged crimes in Afghanistan's brutal conflict.

Fergal Gaynor, a lawyer representing 82 Afghan victims, called it "a historic day for accountability in Afghanistan."

In April, judges rejected a request by the court's prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, to open an investigation into crimes allegedly committed by the Taliban, Afghan security forces and American military and intelligence agencies.

In the ruling, which was condemned by victims and rights groups, the judges said that an investigation "would not serve the interests of justice" because it would likely fail due to lack of cooperation.

The decision came a month after U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo banned visas for ICC staff seeking to investigate allegations of war crimes and other abuses by U.S. forces in Afghanistan or elsewhere.

"Whether the two events are in fact related is unknown, but for many — victims as well as commentators — the timing appeared more than coincidental," said lawyer Katherine Gallagher, who was representing two men being

held at the Guantanamo Bay detention facility in Cuba.

The United States is not a member of the global court and refuses to cooperate with it, seeing the institution as a threat to U.S. sovereignty and arguing American courts are capable of dealing with allegations of abuse by U.S. nationals.

Bensouda's request to open an investigation said there is information that members of the U.S. military and intelligence agencies "committed acts of torture, cruel treatment, outrages upon personal dignity, rape and sexual violence against conflict-related detainees in Afghanistan and other locations, principally in the 2003-2004 period."

EUROPE

2 sentenced to prison for attempted burglary of Americans' home

BY MARCUS KLOECKNER
AND KARIN ZEITVOGEL
Stars and Stripes

ZWEIBRUECKEN, Germany — Two of the four men who tried to force their way into the home of an American family in Landstuhl in February were sentenced to prison Wednesday for attempted burglary.

J.R., 33, wept as the judge sentenced him to four years in prison. The other suspect, J.M., 52, was handed a slightly longer sentence of 4½ years. Under German law, convicted criminals can be named only under specific circumstances.

"We still can't gauge what the full impact on the victims was" of the attempted burglary of their home on Feb. 10, said the judge as she handed down the sentences.

The two men were part of a group of four, three of whom were brothers, that had heard from moving company workers that the American family had high-value objects in a safe in their home.

The four showed up at the house with duct tape, zip ties and a loaded air gun, the court was told in an earlier hearing.

The American father fought back when the men tried to force their way into the home and pushed three of them back out the door. After that, the father, a former Air Force major now working as a civilian for the military, grabbed a kitchen knife and ran upstairs, where the fourth home invader was forcefully holding his hand over the mouth of the American mother to try to silence her.

Two of the family's children

watched everything from their hiding place, the court was told earlier.

The marks around the mother's mouth indicated that the force the suspect was applying could have led to her suffocating, the court heard in earlier hearings.

The American father chased the fourth home invader, H.M., down the stairs and out of the house, stabbing him three times. H.M. died of his wounds on the sidewalk in a nearby village, where his accomplices had left him with J.M., one of his brothers.

J.M.'s and J.R.'s sentences were slightly less than prosecutors had sought because the burglary was unsuccessful and they had both entered guilty pleas, the judge said.

The loss of his brother was another reason why J.M. was sentenced to 4½ years instead of five, she said.

A mitigating factor in J.R.'s sentence was that his family had raised 1,000 euros for the American family, which the court deemed fair compensation for damages.

Johannes Berg, counsel for the American family, said he was satisfied with the sentences but added that the family's ordeal wasn't over yet.

A third suspect, whose case was spun off from the other two because of his long criminal record, is expected to be sentenced in mid-December.

"This is not the end for the family," said Berg. "The trial of the third man is still ongoing."

kloeckner.marcus@stripes.com
zeitvogel.karin@stripes.com

Ramstein GI gets bullets in mail, not sauce he ordered

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN
AND MARCUS KLOECKNER
Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — A box of 250 bullets ordered through Amazon turned up in the military mail last week at Ramstein Air Base, but the U.S. service member who received them says he ordered chocolate sauce, not ammunition.

The 27-year-old man immediately turned the .30-caliber bullets over to U.S. military police, base spokesman Kilian Bluemlein said Wednesday.

The bullets were not complete rounds and the box did not contain shells or gunpowder, Bluemlein said.

The package was given to German police, who announced the incident this week.

German law enforcement officials are examining the projectiles and will likely turn the case over to the U.S. military since the package didn't contain live ammunition, Kaiserslautern police spokesman Luca Schulz said.

Ammunition — even if inert — is illegal to ship through the military postal system in Europe and is considered a criminal offense, a military postal official said.

It's unclear how the purported mix-up happened.

The service member, who was not identified, picked up the box two days before Thanksgiving at a military post office on Ramstein. He was expecting a box of chocolate sauce from Amazon, he told base officials, and was surprised

at how heavy the parcel was.

Amazon acts as a marketplace through which shoppers can choose and buy items directly from merchants and third-party sellers.

A seller who offers firearms and some other weapons violates the tech giant's policy.

"Amazon prohibits the listing or sale of firearm ammunition and ammunition components for assault weapons, black powder guns, handguns, muzzleloaders, pistols, shotguns, and rifles," its website says.

Nevertheless, Amazon has listed ammunition for sale after listings slipped past the company's software algorithms.

A 25-round ammunition clip was found for sale on the site in August, according to a report by The Washington Post, which is owned by Amazon chief executive Jeff Bezos.

svan.jennifer@stripes.com
Twitter: @stripesstown
kloeckner.marcus@stripes.com



Police headquarters Westpfalz, Germany

A U.S. service member at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, received a box of .30-caliber bullets in the mail instead of the chocolate sauce that he said he ordered. The GI immediately turned over the bullets to U.S. military police, a base spokesman said Wednesday.

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EUROPE

Trump: Japan, South Korea should pay more for troops

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

Japan and South Korea can and should pay more to host U.S. forces, President Donald Trump told reporters alongside NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg on Tuesday in London.

Trump, in a video of the press conference posted online by Euronews, said he had recently persuaded South Korea to up its annual contribution to the cost of stationing U.S. troops on the peninsula from just under \$500 million to nearly \$1 billion and that he wants to increase that figure.

"We do a great job. We have 32,000 soldiers there," said Trump, who added he thinks it's fair for Seoul to pay "substantially more."

"In some cases, you have countries that need help that don't have money ... and there's trauma ... and that's a different situation," he said.

Late last month, U.S. negotiators stormed out of a meeting with their South Korean counterparts to discuss the Special Measures Agreement, as the defense cost-sharing contract is known, in Seoul. Neither side released a figure or confirmed reports that the Trump administration is demanding a fivefold increase to nearly \$5 billion per year.

U.S. and South Korean negotiators resumed cost-sharing talks Tuesday in Washington, according to

Voice of America.

Trump also said he had asked Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to help America out.

"You are a wealthy nation and we are paying essentially for your military," he told the reporters in London.

Japan contributes nearly \$1.8 billion annually toward the cost of basing about 50,000 U.S. troops in the country, according to figures published Wednesday by the Mainichi newspaper.

Last month, Japanese Defense Minister Taro Kono refuted reports that his country had been asked to fork over five times as much as it now pays to support U.S. forces stationed there.

Yoshihide Suga, Japan's chief Cabinet secretary, said at a press conference Wednesday he was aware of Trump's remarks in London and wouldn't comment on what Trump and Abe had discussed. A video of Suga's remarks was posted on the prime minister's website.

"That being said, the current expenses for stationing of the U.S. Forces in Japan has been properly allocated by an agreement between Japan and the U.S.," he added.

Stars and Stripes reporter Hana Kusumoto contributed to this report.
robson.seth@stripes.com
Twitter: @SethRobson1



EVAN VUCCA/AP

President Donald Trump speaks during lunch Wednesday with NATO members that have met their financial commitments to the organization as NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg listens.

NATO: In a first, formal talks are held about China's security implications

FROM FRONT PAGE

Macron and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

"He's two-faced," Trump said of Trudeau during a brief news conference alongside German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Wednesday. He paused and said, "And, honestly, with Trudeau, he's a nice guy. I find him to be a very nice guy."

Trump said Trudeau was likely angry over his repeated demands that Canada spend more on defense.

The dispute with Turkey also had threatened to drive a wedge between allies. Macron on Tuesday accused Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of aligning with ISIS elements to further Turkey's agenda in Syria.

"The common enemy today is the terrorist groups. I'm sorry to say, we don't have the same definition of terrorism around the table," Macron said Tuesday alongside Trump. "When I look at Turkey, they are fighting against those who fought with us shoulder-to-shoulder against ISIS, and sometimes they work with ISIS proxies."

Erdogan, whom he behind closed doors with Trump on Wednesday, did not speak publicly during the NATO meeting.

Also on Wednesday, Trump and Stoltenberg touted a defense spending increase of a combined \$130 billion by the European allies and Canada since 2016. By the end of 2024, that figure is expected to rise to \$400 billion, said Stoltenberg, who credited Trump with pushing members to spend more on defense.

"This is unprecedented. And it's making NATO stronger," Stoltenberg said.

Allies moved forward with other priorities, including implementing a plan that calls for nations to have 30 warships, 30

fighter-bomber squadrons and 30 land battalions available for combat in 30 days, Stoltenberg said.

In a first for the alliance, NATO also held formal talks among its leaders about China's security implications.

Throughout its 70-year history, NATO has focused primarily on threats to the trans-Atlantic region and its immediate surroundings.

"China is the second-largest defense spender in the world next to the United States and recently displayed new modern capabilities including nuclear weapons," Stoltenberg said. "So we have to address the rise of China together and I look forward to the allies doing that at this leaders' meeting for the first time."

Putting China on NATO's agenda has been a top military priority of the U.S., which is concerned about Beijing's ambitions in the Arctic and about Chinese 5G technology, which American officials say presents a security risk.

At the luxury hotel in Hertfordshire, northwest of central London, the leaders discussed strategy but didn't disclose any precise steps they would take regarding China.

There were also disagreements within the alliance, most notably between the U.S. and France, on whether China should be viewed as an adversary at all.

At the conclusion of the leaders' meeting, Stoltenberg said allies had agreed to "rely only on secure and resilient systems," but didn't specify if that would exclude Chinese technology.

Trump, meanwhile, said separately that some leaders he has spoken with have pledged not to use China's 5G equipment.

vandiver.john@stripes.com
Twitter: @john_vandiver

NATO leaders appear to gossip about Trump in unguarded chat

By JILL LAWLESS
Associated Press

WATFORD, England — While NATO leaders professed unity on Wednesday at a summit near London, a spat rippled under the surface after several were caught in an unguarded exchange on camera apparently gossiping about President Donald Trump's behavior.

Trump branded Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau "two-faced" after the remarks captured during a reception in London at Buckingham Palace.

Trudeau was seen standing in a huddle with French President Emmanuel Macron, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte and Britain's Princess Anne, daughter of Queen Elizabeth II, at Tuesday evening's event.

After Johnson asked Macron, "Is that why you were late?" Trudeau could be heard saying "he was late because he takes a 40-minute press conference off the top." That appeared to be a reference to Trump's long and unscheduled question-and-answer session with journalists earlier Tuesday.

Trudeau also said, "You just watched his team's jaws drop to the floor."

Trump wasn't mentioned by name during the exchange.

Footage of the palace reception was recorded by a pool camera. The clip was posted online by Canadian broadcaster CBC and has been viewed more than 5 million times.



HOST BROADCASTER/AP

In this screen grab taken from video Tuesday, French President Emmanuel Macron, center right, gestures as he speaks with, from left, Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson. The NATO leaders seemed to have been caught in an unguarded exchange on camera apparently gossiping about President Donald Trump.

Trump said Wednesday that Trudeau was likely upset that the U.S. president had broached the fact that Canada falls short of the NATO target of spending 2% of its gross domestic product on defense.

"Well he's two-faced," Trump told reporters Wednesday. "And, honestly, with Trudeau, he's a nice guy — I find him to be a very nice guy — but you know the truth is I called him out on the fact that he's not paying 2% and I guess he's not very happy about it."

Trudeau's office had no immediate comment. Trudeau spoke briefly to Trump as NATO leaders gathered for a summit Wednesday in Watford, outside London, and the two men shook hands.

Leaders of the 29 NATO states are marking the 70th anniversary of the military alliance — and trying to patch up differences over defense spending, the alliance's strategic direction and member nation Turkey's military action in northern Syria.

NATION

Hearing: Legal experts called by Democrats back impeachment

FROM FRONT PAGE

president, the dredging up of unfounded allegations as part of an effort to undo the 2016 election and remove Trump from office.

"You just don't like the guy," said Rep. Doug Collins, of Georgia, the top Republican on the panel. He called the proceedings a "disgrace" and a "sham."

Several Republicans immediately objected to the process, interjecting procedural questions, and they planned to spend much of the session interrupting, delaying and questioning the rules.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said Democrats "haven't made a decision" yet on whether there will be a vote on impeachment. She was also meeting privately with the Democratic caucus. But a vote by Christmas appears increasingly likely with the release of a 300-page report by Democrats on the House Intelligence Committee that found "serious misconduct" by the president.

Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff, D-Calif., told The Associated Press: "Americans need to understand that this president is putting his personal political interests above theirs. And that it's endangering the country."

The Judiciary Committee heard Wednesday from legal experts, delving particularly into the issue of whether Trump's actions stemming from the July 25 phone call with Ukraine's president rose to the constitutional level of "bribery" or "high crimes and misdemeanors" warranting impeachment. The report laid out evidence that the Democrats say shows Trump's efforts to seek foreign intervention in the U.S. election and then obstruct the House's investigation.

Trump told reporters in London, where he was attending a NATO meeting, that he doubted many people would watch the live hearing "because it's going to be boring."

Trump did phone in to the House GOP's morning meeting with Pence to talk with House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy. The California Republican said impeachment didn't come up. "The unity has been very positive," he said.

New telephone call records revealed with the report between Trump lawyer Rudy Giuliani's known involvement in what House investigators called the "scheme" to use the president's office for personal political gain by enlisting a foreign power, Ukraine, to indict the president, including Joe Biden and intervene in the American election process.

Trump told reporters he really doesn't know why Giuliani was calling the White House's Office of Management and Budget, which was withholding \$400 million in military aid to the ally confronting an aggressive Russia at its border.

"You have to ask him," Trump said. "Sounds like something that's not so complicated. ... No big deal."

At the hearing, the three legal experts called by Democrats backed impeachment. Noah Feld-



George Washington University Law School professor Jonathan Turley testifies during a hearing before the House Judiciary Committee on the constitutional grounds for the impeachment of President Donald Trump on Wednesday.



J. SCOTT APPELWHITE/AP

From left, in foreground, Rep. Matt Gaetz, R-Fla.; Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner, R-Wis.; and Rep. Andy Biggs, R-Ariz., prepare for the start of the House Judiciary Committee hearing.

man, a Harvard Law School professor, said he considered it clear that the president's conduct met the definition of "high crimes and misdemeanors." Pamela Karlan, a Stanford Law School professor and former Obama administration Justice Department official, said the president's action constituted an especially serious abuse of power "because it undermines democracy itself."

Republican witness Jonathan Turley, a law professor at George Washington University, said that the Democrats were bringing a "slipshod impeachment" case against the president, but he didn't excuse the president's behavior.

"It is not wrong because President Trump is right," according to Turley. "A case for impeachment could be made, but it cannot be made on this record," he said.

The political risks are high for all parties as the House pres-

es only the fourth presidential impeachment inquiry in U.S. history.

Based on two months of investigation sparked by a still-anonymous government whistleblower's complaint, the Intelligence Committee's Trump-Ukraine Impeachment Inquiry Report relies heavily on testimony from current and former U.S. officials who defied White House orders not to appear.

The inquiry found that Trump "solicited the interference of a foreign government, Ukraine, to benefit his reelection." Schiff wrote in the report's preface.

In doing so, the president "sought to undermine the integrity of the U.S. presidential election process, and endangered U.S. national security," the report said.

When Congress began investigating, it added, Trump obstructed the investigation like no other

president in history.

Along with revelations from earlier testimony, the new phone records raised fresh questions about Giuliani's interactions with the top Republican on the intelligence panel, Rep. Devin Nunes, of California. Nunes declined to comment. Schiff said his panel would continue its probe.

Republicans defended the president in a 123-page rebuttal claiming Trump never intended to pressure Ukraine when he asked for a "favor" — investigations of Democrats and Biden and his son. They say the military aid the White House was withholding was not being used as leverage, as Democrats claim — and besides, the \$400 million was ultimately released, although only after a congressional outcry.

For Republicans falling in line behind Trump, the inquiry is simply a "hoax." Trump criticized the House for pushing forward with the proceedings while he was overseas, a breach of political decorum that traditionally leaves partisan differences at the water's edge.

Democrats once hoped to sway Republicans to consider Trump's removal, but they are now facing a ever-hardening partisan split over the swift-moving proceedings that are dividing Congress and the country.

Possible grounds for impeachment are focused on whether Trump abused his office as he pressed Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to open investigations into Trump's political rivals. At the time, Trump was withholding \$400 million in military aid, jeopardizing key support as Ukraine faces an aggressive Russia at its border.

The report also accuses Trump of obstruction, becoming the "first and only" president in U.S. history to "openly and indiscrim-

nately" defy the House's constitutional authority to conduct the impeachment proceedings by instructing officials not to comply with subpoenas for documents and testimony.

For Democrats marching into what is now a largely partisan process, the political challenge is if they proceed to craft the impeachment articles in a way that will draw the most support from their ranks and not expose Pelosi's majority to messy divisions, especially as Republicans stand with the president.

While liberal Democrats are pushing the party to go farther and incorporate the findings from former special counsel Robert Mueller's report on Russian interference in the 2016 election and other actions by Trump, more centrist and moderate Democrats prefer to stick with the Ukraine matter as a simpler narrative that Americans understand.

Democrats could begin drafting articles of impeachment against the president in a matter of days, with a Judiciary Committee vote next week. The full House could vote by Christmas. Then the move moves to the Senate for a trial in 2020.

The White House declined an invitation to participate Wednesday, with counsel Pat Cipollone denouncing the proceedings as a "baseless and highly partisan inquiry." Cipollone, who will brief Senate Republicans on Wednesday, left open the question of whether White House officials would participate in additional House hearings.

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NATION

Carbon pollution still rising but at a slower rate

By SETH BORENSTEIN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The world continues to increase the amount of heat-trapping carbon dioxide it pumps into the air, but it's not rising as fast as in the previous couple of years.

Led by big jumps from China and India, the world is projected to spew 40.57 billion tons of carbon dioxide into the air in 2019. That's up nearly 255 million tons from 2018, according to two scientific studies released Tuesday. The studies by Global Carbon Project, a group of international scientists who track emissions, show a 0.6% increase from last year.

In previous years, global carbon dioxide emissions grew by 2.1% and 1.5% after a few years in the mid 2010s when global emissions barely rose, according to the studies in Environmental Research Letters. Carbon dioxide from the burning of coal, oil and gas has caused 1.8 degrees of warming since pre-industrial times, and world leaders are meeting in Madrid to try to limit warming to another 1.8 degrees from now.

"Emissions grew more slowly than last year but we still set a global record. It's hard to be upbeat about that," said study co-author Rob Jackson, a Stanford University climate scientist.

"The U.S. National Academy of Sciences sounded the alarm on carbon and climate 40 years ago. Since then, global carbon dioxide emissions have doubled, and the world is hurtling towards catastrophic climate change."

The 2019 estimate is based on data through the first nine to 10 months of the year, with a few national estimates based on only six months of data, said co-author Glen Peters, a climate scientist in Norway. Past projections have proven pretty accurate, he said.

That means every second this year, people put 2.57 million pounds of carbon dioxide in Earth's atmosphere. That's the equivalent weight of two Airbus A380s, the world's largest passenger airliner, going into the air every second.

Both the United States and the European Union saw emissions drop 1.7% from 2018 to 2019, but China saw a 2.6% increase and India had a 1.8% rise. China is by far the biggest carbon polluter, with 28% of the 2019 emissions. The United States is No. 2 at 14.5%.

"Generally, I think this is bad news. Not terrible news, but bad news," said Cornell University climate scientist Natalie Mahowald, who wasn't part of the report.

'Emissions grew more slowly than last year but we still set a global record. It's hard to be upbeat about that.'

Rob Jackson
study co-author

ald, who wasn't part of the report. "A stronger switch from coal to solar or wind needs to happen to reach low climate targets."

Led by 10% drops in both the United States and Europe, carbon pollution from coal dropped worldwide nearly 1% but increased 2.6% from cleaner natural gas, according to the studies. Coal still is the No. 1 source of man-made carbon pollution putting 16 billion tons of carbon dioxide in the air this year, followed by oil and then gas. Coal generally emits 76% more carbon dioxide than natural gas, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

"I don't think we have completely seen the end of coal yet, but it is certainly in the death throes," Peters said. "Though I would imagine a slow and protracted decline of coal because of the young infrastructure in Asia."

With coal dropping or even just plateauing, it is now apparent that the world is not quite on the worst-case scenario carbon emissions path of the four charted by the U.N.'s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Peters said. But the next two highest emission scenarios, which the world is closer to, are not "pleasant worlds to live in," he said.

Princeton University climate scientist Michael Oppenheimer, who wasn't part of the study, called the numbers grim.

"Stepping back and looking at 30 years of data, there is nothing at all that reveals any reason to be optimistic that the world is about to turn the corner on reducing carbon dioxide emissions."

The United States, which is in the early part of a yearlong process of pulling out of the 2015 Paris climate agreement, has reduced its carbon dioxide pollution by 9.7% between 2000 and 2018, Jackson calculated.

Critics of the Paris agreement said the U.S. is the leader in reducing emissions.



JULIO CORTES/AP

Maryland corrections secretary Robert Green, left, listens as Baltimore City State's Attorney Marilyn Mosby announces the indictment of 25 correctional officers in Baltimore on Tuesday.

Baltimore officers indicted for assaulting, threatening inmates

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN
Associated Press

BALTIMORE — More than two dozen correctional officers in Baltimore were charged Tuesday with using excessive force on prisoners at state-operated jails in a city plagued by decades of institutional corruption, inside and outside jailhouse walls.

The 25 indicted officers are accused of assaulting and threatening detainees at correctional facilities, tampering with evidence and falsifying documents, said Baltimore City State's Attorney Marilyn Mosby, whose office secured the indictments.

Maryland corrections secretary Robert Green said all the indicted officers have been on administrative leave since 2018,

when the state Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services began investigating the allegations.

Indicted officers used social media to publicly promote their "reputation and successes," and they furtively used winks, nods and other body language to warn each other about the presence of supervisors and other "non-members," the indictment says.

Gov. Larry Hogan said in a statement that his administration has no tolerance for corruption in the state's correctional system.

"Our correctional officers have one of the most difficult jobs in all of public safety, and we will not let the criminal behavior of the few tarnish the great work of the nearly 5,000 dedicated officers

who serve with distinction every single day," he said.

Hogan, a Republican, said the department's anti-corruption efforts have led to the arrests and convictions of more than 200 officers, inmates and "citizen accomplices."

In 2015, Maryland closed the men's section of a state-run Baltimore jail that was notorious for its decrepit conditions, criminal activity and corruption.

In 2013, a federal indictment exposed a sophisticated smuggling ring operating inside the Baltimore City Detention Center involving dozens of gang members and correctional officers. The investigation also revealed that a jailhouse gang leader had impregnated four female guards.

Gun background checks on record pace

By LISA MARIE PANE
Associated Press

Background checks on gun purchases in the U.S. are climbing toward a record high this year, reflecting what the industry says is a rush by people to buy weapons in reaction to the Democratic presidential candidates' calls for tighter restrictions.

By the end of November, more than 25.4 million background checks — generally seen as a strong indicator of gun sales — had been conducted by the FBI, putting 2019 on pace to break the record of 27.5 million set in 2016, the last full year President Barack Obama was in the White House.

On Black Friday, the FBI ran 202,465 checks.

Some analysts question how accurately the background check figures translate into gun sales, since some states run checks on applications for concealed-carry permits too, and some purchases involve multiple firearms. But the numbers remain the most reliable method of tracking the industry.

In the years since President Donald Trump took office, the industry has struggled through what has been referred to as the Trump slump, a falloff in sales that reflected little worry among gun owners about gun control efforts.

But with the 2020 presidential election less than a year out and virtually every Democratic candidate offering proposals to restrict access to firearms,



MICHAEL CONROY/AP

The number of background checks conducted by federal authorities is on pace to break a record by the end of this year, according to FBI statistics.

fears appear to be driving up sales again.

"The Trump Slump is real, but the politics of guns has changed a little bit over the last year," said Adam Winkler, a professor at the University of California, Los Angeles, School of Law and an expert on gun rights and politics. "As we're coming up upon another presidential election, Donald Trump is vulnerable, and the Democratic presidential contenders are falling all over themselves to propose more aggressive gun reforms than their opponents."

NATION

Report: Racial divide shrinks in US criminal justice system

By DON THOMPSON
Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Racial disparities have narrowed across the U.S. criminal justice system over 16 years, though black people are still significantly more likely to be behind bars than white people, new federal figures show.

Racial gaps broadly declined in local jails, state prisons and among people on probation and parole, according to the study released Tuesday by the nonpartisan Council on Criminal Justice.

The divide in state imprisonment rates dropped for all major crimes but was most pronounced for drug offenses — a key driving factor for the racial shift. Black people were 15 times more likely than white people to be in state prisons for drug crimes in 2000, but that dropped to five times as likely by 2016, the most recent year available.

Many don't realize how much

the racial gap has narrowed, not only in incarceration but in parole and probation, said Adam Gelb, president and chief executive of the politically diverse council that launched in July to seek solutions to problems in the criminal justice system.

"Most people think this is a bad problem that's getting worse," said Gelb, whose group has brought together governors of both parties, police officials and Black Lives Matter organizers. "It turns out it's a bad problem that's getting a little better, and for very complex reasons that we need to understand at a much deeper level."

Critics contend minorities' disproportionate involvement in the U.S. criminal justice system reflects systemic racial bias. Researchers have blamed prejudice by police, prosecutors, judges and juries; racial differences in crimes; and get-tough sentencing laws during the high crime era of

the 1980s and '90s.

While racial inequity in arrests and incarcerations narrowed, the length of prison sentences increased across all crime types for black people and partially offset the benefits, according to the report co-authored by Georgia State University professor William Sabol, former director of the federal Bureau of Justice Statistics.

Among the other findings of the report, which is based on numbers from the bureau, the FBI and other national statistics:

■ Black men were in state prisons at nine times the rate of white inmates in 2000, which dropped to a still disparate 6-to-1 by 2016. The change mostly stemmed from a 30% decline in the black male imprisonment rate, largely driven by falling drug crimes.

■ Black women were imprisoned at a rate of six for every white inmate in 2000, which fell to 2-to-1 by 2016. Fewer black



RICH PEDRONCELLI/AP

Inmates walk through the exercise yard at California State Prison Sacramento, near Folsom, Calif., in 2013. A study released Tuesday shows racial disparities have shrunk across the criminal justice system since 2000.

women were being incarcerated for drug crimes, while more white women were imprisoned for violent, property and drug crimes.

■ The disparities between Black people and white people also shrank across all categories since 2000.

The nonpartisan Public Policy Institute of California reported a similar marked drop in the racial divide in arrest trends since the 1980s in the nation's most populous state but also found that black people are still far more likely to be arrested than white people.

Detective posthumously receives award for MS-13 cases

By MICHAEL BALSAMO
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A New York police detective who relentlessly investigated killings committed by MS-13 gang members before succumbing to cancer last year became the first law enforcement officer to posthumously receive a distinguished service award from the U.S. attorney general on Tuesday.

Attorney General William Barr presented the award to the family of Suffolk

County police Detective William Maldonado, who died in April 2018 after a three-year battle with colon cancer. He was one of 19 law enforcement officers from across the U.S. who were recognized by the Attorney General's Award for Distinguished Service in Policing during a ceremony at the Justice Department's headquarters in Washington.

Maldonado had worked on the FBI's Long Island Gang Task Force, where he was involved in prosecutions of more than 40 MS-13 members, solving more than

a dozen homicides and 25 robberies. The brutal MS-13 street gang, also known as Mara Salvatrucha, is blamed for dozens of killings on Long Island since 2016.

The violence, including the 2016 slayings of two teenage girls in Brentwood, helped spark an aggressive effort by the FBI and the Justice Department to dismantle the gang, which the U.S. considers one of the top transnational organized crime threats.

Maldonado was first assigned to assist with investigating a young man's disappearance and helped gather intelligence

to suggest he was actually the victim of an MS-13 killing, Barr said. Maldonado and fellow detectives worked aggressively to arrest dozens of people in connection with 17 killings on Long Island and, despite having cancer, he rarely missed work, the attorney general said.

Maldonado joined the Suffolk County Police Department in 1987 and was promoted to detective in 1994. His mother, his wife and his two daughters accepted the award from Barr on Maldonado's behalf.

Buffalo bishop resigns amid criticism of handling of misconduct

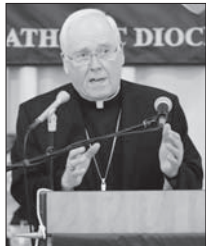
By NICOLE WINFIELD
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Pope Francis on Wednesday accepted the resignation of Buffalo Bishop Richard Malone following widespread criticism from Malone's staff, priests and the public over how he handled allegations of clergy sexual misconduct.

The Vatican announced the resignation in a brief statement, adding that Francis had named Edward Scharfenberger, the bishop of Albany, N.Y., to run the Buffalo Diocese temporarily until a permanent replacement is found.

The Vatican's embassy to the U.S. said Malone offered to step down two years before the mandatory retirement age of 75 after learning the results of a Vatican-mandated inquiry into the western New York diocese and its handling of abuse cases.

In a statement, Malone said



FRANK FRANKLIN II/AP

Bishop Richard Malone of Buffalo resigned after coming under fire for his handling of clergy misconduct.

he had come to believe "that the spiritual welfare of the people of the Diocese of Buffalo will be better served by a new bishop who

perhaps is better able to bring about the reconciliation, healing and renewal that is so needed."

The diocese has been named in more than 220 recent lawsuits by people who allege they were sexually abused by priests.

Many of the allegations date back decades, long before Malone's arrival in Buffalo in 2012.

But critics say there have been more recent missteps by Malone, including his decision to return to the ministry a priest who had been suspended by a previous bishop for including "love you" in a Facebook message to an eighth-grade boy.

Malone later endorsed the same priest for a job as a cruise ship chaplain, even after he was also accused of making unwanted advances toward young men.

Malone has admitted to making mistakes in cases involving adult victims.

But he had firmly refused to resign and insisted he wanted to

stay on the job to see the diocese through a process of "renewal." Pressure on him to leave was intense.

In the past year, two key members of Malone's staff have gone public with concerns about his leadership, including his former secretary, the Rev. Ryszard Biernat, who secretly recorded Malone calling a then-active priest "a sick puppy" but taking no immediate action to remove him.

Earlier, his executive assistant, Siobhan O'Connor, leaked internal church documents after becoming concerned that Malone had intentionally omitted dozens of names from a publicly released list of priests with credible allegations of abuse.

A diocesan priest, meanwhile, circulated a "no confidence" letter for signatures.

And in September, the Movement to Restore Trust, a group of lay Catholics that had been working with Malone to restore trust

in the church, instead joined in calls for his resignation.

The Vatican hasn't released the results of the inquiry into Buffalo that was conducted by Brooklyn Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio.

Malone said he had been made aware of the "general conclusions" of the report and that they had been a factor in his decision to seek early retirement.

"It is my honest assessment that I have accomplished as much as I am able to, and that there remain divisions and wounds that I am unable to bind and heal," he said.

DiMarzio said he had conducted his investigation with "urgency" at the request of the Holy See, interviewing 80 people over several weeks.

"I pray this moment of suffering and pain will lead to a birth of new faith," he said.

FACES

'We should have stayed'

The Who's Pete Townshend regrets leaving site of 1979 stampede that left 11 dead, 23 injured

The Associated Press

Forty years after a stampede left 11 people dead and 23 injured at a Who concert in Cincinnati, Pete Townshend says he's always regretted not sticking around to deal with the aftermath.

Instead, the band left the Riverfront Coliseum on December 3, 1979, and moved on to Buffalo, N.Y., the next stop on their tour.

"I'm not forgiving us. We should have stayed," Townshend told The Associated Press during a recent interview where he was promoting his debut novel, "The Age of Anxiety."

The tragedy occurred as fans surrounded the arena hoping to claim a seat near the stage. Thousands had waited hours to get inside, ready to charge in for first-come seating.

The band didn't find out about the tragedy until the end of the show. Townshend recalls the band's manager, Bill Curbushley, telling him: "I've got something terrible to tell you."

Townshend then described the shock of seeing bodies sprawled on the ground as they left the stadium — "many of whom weren't dead, by the way," he said. "They didn't know who was dead and who was just badly hurt; maybe 40 bodies under blankets."

Townshend remembered the rage he felt toward Curbushley for not telling the band about the tragedy before the show, admitting that he "wanted to kill him."

"You could at least give (us) a choice as to

whether or not to go on," Townshend said.

"But the choice none of us made, which was equally dim, was that we left the building. You know, we should have stayed."

Curbushley declined comment when contacted by The Associated Press. However, in an interview with WCPO of Cincinnati, he said he fought with emergency officials and insisted the concert go on so there wouldn't be more disruption, and believes it likely saved lives.

"I said, 'If you stop them, you're going to have more problems on the arena floor. You could have more people hurt for sure, and if they came back through this area, the medical teams are never going to be able to cope with what they're doing,'" he told WCPO. "And if keeping my band on stage saves even one life, to me, that's what it's about."

The Who announced Tuesday night it will play its first Cincinnati-area concert since the stampede on April 23 at Northern Kentucky University's BB&T Arena.

Townshend and lead singer Roger Daltrey both have said they've been haunted by the tragedy. Townshend recently told The Associated Press he was looking forward to discussing it in Cincinnati.

"Now we can have a conversation about it when we go back," Townshend said. "We will meet people and we'll be there. We'll be there. That's what's important. I'm so glad that we've got this opportunity to go back."



INVISION/AP



AP

Filmmaking duo Peter Farrelly (left) and Bobby Farrelly in 2015.

'Green Book' director, brother get disability award

"Green Book" director Peter Farrelly and his brother, Bobby Farrelly, director of 1998's "There's Something About Mary," are being recognized for pressing Hollywood repeatedly and publicly to do a better job of casting and portraying people with disabilities.

The Boston-based Ruderman Family Foundation, a leading voice in calling for more opportunities for the disabled, said Wednesday the brothers are the recipients of its sixth annual Morton E. Ruderman Award in Inclusion.

The foundation told The Associated Press it picked the Farrellys for their outspoken efforts to make movies more inclusive and authentic. They'll be presented with the award next spring.

"When you tell a story, you

want it to take place in a real world — and it's not a real world if they don't include everybody," said Peter Farrelly, who co-wrote and directed "Green Book," which won Oscars for best picture and best original screenplay in 2018.

Bobby Farrelly recalled how the brothers played with children with disabilities in the neighborhood where they grew up in Cumberland, R.I.

"They made us laugh. They were our friends," he said in a videotaped message.

"And so when we started making movies, we thought, why wouldn't we include people with disabilities in the movies — in the stories that we tell — because they are a part of our life."

The Associated Press

Drake Spotify's most-streamed artist of the decade

From wire reports

Drake is the king of streaming: the rapper has been named Spotify's most-streamed artist of the decade.

Spotify announced Tuesday that Drake has been streamed 28 billion times in the past 10 years. Ed Sheeran came in second, while Post Malone, Ariana Grande and Eminem round out the Top 5. Sheeran's "Shape of You" was the most-streamed song of the decade.

For 2019, Post Malone is the top-streamed artist globally. Billie Eilish, Grande, Sheeran and Bad Bunny round out the Top 5. Eilish's debut album — "When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?" — is the year's most-streamed album, while Shawn Mendes and Camila Cabello's "Señorita" tops the list of the most-streamed songs.

'The Irishman' earns best picture from National Board of Review

Director Martin Scorsese's mob epic "The Irishman" has been named the year's best picture by the National Board of Review.

The award for the sprawling drama, which stars Robert De Niro, Al Pacino and Joe Pesci, is a boost to Netflix in its ongoing effort to land its first-ever Oscar for best picture.

But in what has thus far been a fairly wide open Oscar race, the critics organization spread its love to other top contenders as well. Quentin Tarantino was named best director for "Once Upon a Time ... in Hollywood," which also earned Brad Pitt a supporting actor win. Renee Zellweger earned the best actress prize for the Judy Garland biopic "Judy." Adam Sandler, who is considered a long shot for an Oscar nod in a competitive year, earned the best actor award for his turn as a diamond merchant in the crime drama "Uncut Gems."

The board's selections are a precursor to a slew of other awards and nominations soon to come as Oscar season kicks into high gear.

Cicely Tyson, Seth MacFarlane joining TV Hall of Fame

Cicely Tyson, Seth MacFarlane and Walt Disney Co. chief executive Bob Iger will be joining the Television Academy's Hall of Fame.

Geraldine Laybourne, who helped create the Nickelodeon channel and co-founded Oxygen Media, and veteran TV director Jay Sandrich also were announced Tuesday as inductees. Sandrich's credits include "The Mary Tyler Moore Show" and "The Golden Girls."

Tyson won three Emmy Awards over her nearly seven-decade acting career, including two trophies for 1974's "The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman" and one for 1994's "Oldest Living Confederate Widow Tells All."

MacFarlane, a writer, director, producer and performer, is a five-time Emmy winner for his animated series "Family Guy."

Iger became CEO of Disney in 2005, and during his tenure the company acquired Pixar, Marvel, Lucasfilm and 21st Century Fox and launched the new Disney Plus streaming service.

Children of Casey Kasem settle lawsuit with widow over death

Family members of radio personality Casey Kasem have settled dueling lawsuits alleging that the longtime "American Top 40" host was badly mistreated before his death in 2014.

The two sides filed a joint request Monday in Los Angeles Superior Court to dismiss a wrongful death lawsuit by three of Kasem's children and his brother against Kasem's widow that claimed her neglect and physical abuse led to his death, as well as a countersuit making similar claims against the plaintiffs that was filed by his widow and another daughter. The terms of the agreement were not revealed, and attorneys did not immediately respond to emails seeking comment.

WORLD

China, US clash over bills

Associated Press

BEIJING — Already strained relations between China and the United States were further muddled after U.S. Congress overwhelmingly approved a bill targeting Beijing's mass crackdown on ethnic Muslim minorities Wednesday, less than one week after President Donald Trump signed separate human rights legislation on Hong Kong.

China's ruling Communist Party has long regarded Hong Kong and the far west Xinjiang region as crucial areas for asserting territorial sovereignty, and it has responded with fury to what it considers foreign meddling.

"Xinjiang is China's Xinjiang," said a statement from China's National Ethnic Affairs Commission, echoing another government mantra: "Hong Kong is China's Hong Kong."

Tensions over the recently passed U.S. bills have cast doubt over the potential for a trade deal between the two countries, which have been embroiled in a 16-month tariff war. Trump said Tuesday that he has "no deadline" for striking an agreement and that he may wait until after next year's presidential election.

The Uighur Human Rights Policy Act denounces the detention of an estimated 1 million Uighurs, Kazakhs and others in Xinjiang, home to the predominantly Muslim minority groups. It would require the State Department to evaluate whether Chinese officials would meet the criteria for sanctions for their roles in enacting oppressive policies.

The bill "disregards the facts and mixes up black and white," the Foreign Affairs Commission of China's legislature said in one among a slew of strongly

worded rebukes from government departments.

"It is regrettable that U.S. Congress has not only turned a blind eye to Xinjiang's efforts to combat terrorism and protect human rights in accordance with laws and regulations, but also to Xinjiang's current economic development, social stability, national unity and religious harmony," the commission said.

Former detainees and their family members have told The Associated Press that they were arbitrarily held in heavily secured, prisonlike camps where they were pressured to renounce their faith and express gratitude to the ruling Communist Party. A recent leak of classified Chinese government documents revealed a blueprint for rewiring the thoughts of ethnic minorities who had not committed any crimes.

Beijing says the measures are necessary to combat terrorism and eradicate religious extremism, calling the facilities "vocational training centers" for those who lack employable skills.

China has repeatedly criticized the U.S. for interfering in its affairs, most recently accusing Washington of being a "black hand" that has orchestrated riots in Hong Kong.

After Trump signed bills mandating sanctions on Chinese and Hong Kong officials, an annual review of Hong Kong's favorable trade status and a ban on exporting nonlethal munitions to Hong Kong police, China retaliated Monday by suspending U.S. military ship and aircraft visits to Hong Kong.

It also said it would sanction a number of groups, including Human Rights Watch and the National Endowment for Democracy, that have "performed badly" in regard to the unrest in Hong Kong.

Iranian consulate in Iraq is burned for a 3rd time

Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Anti-government protesters burned an Iranian consulate in southern Iraq for a third time on Tuesday as the country's political leaders continued talks over selecting a new prime minister following weeks of widespread unrest.

Five rockets landed inside Ain al-Asad airbase, a sprawling complex in Western Anbar which hosts U.S. forces, without causing any casualties and little damage, said a statement from Iraq's security media cell on Tuesday evening. The statement gave no further details.

President Barham Salih met with Iraq's main political blocs as a 15-day constitutional deadline to name the next prime minister nears, two Iraqi officials said. Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Madi announced his resignation on Friday. The Sairoon bloc, led by influential Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, addressed Salih in a letter and said they gave protesters the right to support a premier of their choice.

Anti-government protesters in the holy city of Najaf burned tires and hurled them toward the main gate of the Iranian consulate,

burning it for the third time in the span of a week. The building was empty at the time of the attack and there were no casualties, according to a police official.

The incident came after hours of a tense standoff with security forces earlier Tuesday when protesters surrounded a key shrine in Najaf. Demonstrators gathered around the Hakim shrine, demanding that al-Sadr help them enter and symbolically take control. Sadr commands Saraya Salam, a powerful militia group. A few protesters and some elderly tribal sheikhs were eventually permitted to enter the shrine and inspect it.

The protesters believe the shrine is a center for Iranian intelligence operations, the police official said.

Officials all requested anonymity in line with regulations.

Najaf has been one of the flashpoints in the protest movement after demonstrators torched the Iranian Consulate there on Nov. 27 and again on Dec. 1. The Hakim shrine has been the focus of recent violence. Three protesters were killed and 24 wounded on Saturday as security forces used live rounds to disperse them.

Stripes

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Lt. Col. Sean Kirmek, Europe commander
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EDITORIAL

Terry Leonard, Editor
leonard.terry@stars.com
Robert H. Reid, Senior Managing Editor
reid.robert@stars.com
Tina Croley, Managing Editor for Content
croley.tina@stars.com
Sean Moores, Managing Editor for Presentation
moores.sean@stars.com
Joe Gromelski, Managing Editor for Digital
gromelski.joe@stars.com

BUREAU STAFF

Europe/Mideast
Erik Slavin, Europe & Mideast Bureau Chief
slavin.erik@stars.com
+49(0)631.3615.9390, DSN (314)583.9350

Pacific
Aaron Kidd, Pacific Bureau Chief
kidd.aaron@stars.com
+81-42.552.2511 ext. 88380, DSN (315)227.7380

Washington
Joseph Cacioli, Washington Bureau Chief
cacioli.joseph@stars.com
(+1)202(886-0033
Brian Bowers, Assistant Managing Editor, News
bowers.brian@stars.com

CIRCULATION

Mideast
Robert Reisman, Mideast Circulation Manager
robert.r.reisman.naf@gmail.com
DSN (314)583.9111

Europe
Karen Lewis, Community Engagement Manager
lewis.karen@stars.com
memberservices@stars.com
+49(0)631.3615.9090, DSN (314)583.9090

Pacific
Mari Mori, customerhelp@stars.com
+81-3-6385.3171, DSN (315)227.7333

CONTACT US

Washington
tel: 202.486.0023
633 3rd St. NW, Suite 116, Washington, DC 20001-3500

Reader letters
letters@stars.com
Additional contacts
stars@stars.com/contact

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Ernie Gates

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OPINION

Harris couldn't get traction with expected base

By EUGENE SCOTT
The Washington Post

Sen. Kamala Harris ended her bid for the White House unable to rally significant support from the voting blocs her campaign and many political watchers thought would play a major role in sending her to the Oval Office: black voters and women.

The California Democrat's campaign was loaded with historical symbolism from its earliest moment. The first black woman elected to the U.S. Senate from California announced her pursuit of the Oval Office on the birthday of civil rights icon Martin Luther King Jr. And she regularly paid homage to late congresswoman Shirley Chisholm, D-N.Y., the first black woman to seek a major party's presidential nomination, during her campaign.

But the biracial lawmaker with an unfamiliar name who some believed was best situated to carry on the Obama legacy was never able to persuade large swaths of those who backed the former president to support her.

Despite having viral, breakout moments during the Senate's investigation of Russia's interference into the 2016 presidential election, Harris remained largely unknown to many Americans before launching her campaign — including some among the demographic group some believed would propel her into the upper tier of the campaign. Her campaign was a reminder that being well-known in Washington and political circles is not the same thing as having national recognition. While some more established liberal candidates were working to convince voters that they were best positioned to undo President Donald Trump's political decisions, Harris was in many ways still introducing herself. That put the junior senator at a bit of disadvantage — even with black women, one of the Democratic Party's most influential voting blocs.

Some of Trump's biggest critiques come from black women — a group that voters against the GOP at higher rates than most. But while many black women long for representation at the highest level of government, some voters questioned whether a black woman could attract the broad support needed to defeat Trump. That concern, along with former Vice President Joe Biden's long history with black voters, is part of what sent Biden flying past Harris in polls with black voters shortly after launching his campaign.

Danielle Moodie-Mills, host of the “WokeAF” podcast, said last week that the former vice president who enjoys widespread name recognition is a safe bet with many black voters.

“You have older black voters who are definitely on his side because they are looking to see where are the white voters who voted for Donald Trump going to go,” she said on MSNBC. “We understand what oppression and discrimination looks like on regular basis, and we understand Donald Trump to be a lethal threat to our way of life. And so we are going to go ... the way that seems the safest.”

There were also questions about Harris among some of those groups she sought to win. Her history as a prosecutor — and role in advocating for tough sentences for people of color — forced her to answer questions that voters looking for a candidate committed to criminal justice reform repeatedly asked. And some black Americans questioned whether the daughter of a Jamaican immigrant raised by an Indian woman could respond to the issues affecting black Americans calling on the United States to reexamine the ongoing effects of slavery on racial gaps.

In her announcement ending her campaign, Harris pointed toward fundraising being the biggest obstacle that kept her from moving forward.

“My campaign for president simply

couldn't have the financial resources we need to continue,” she wrote. “... And as the campaign has gone on, it's become harder and harder to raise the money we need to compete.”

Harris noted that she was not able to self-fund her campaign like some of her billionaire competitors, but she does have more money than some of her competitors. In fact, enough to qualify for the December debate, something not all of her competitors have done.

With Harris' exit, the stage for this month's Democratic debate primarily consists of white candidates and older candidates during a time when the left's constituency is younger and more ethnically diverse. Despite this shift, long-standing perceptions of leadership remain among some voters.

Kimberly Peeler-Allen, co-founder of Higher Heights, a political action committee that helps black women get elected to office, previously told The Washington Post that black women seeking office often have a harder time than white men in getting people to get behind their campaign.

“I think a lot of it has to do with our perception of what leadership looks like. For 100 years, the majority of elected leaders have been white and male,” she said. “You come and counter that with a woman — and a woman of color, and a black woman at that — seeking the highest office in the land, it's something out of the norm.”

Regular frustrations with conversations about accessibility led Harris' defenders to argue that she was the most prepared candidate to defeat Trump. But for those who were hoping that Harris would break the glass ceiling that 2016 Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton could not, 2020 was simply not Harris' time. And as clichéd as it sounds, in politics timing is often everything.

Eugene Scott writes about identity politics for the Washington Post blog The Fix.

China won't let Hong Kong resemble Tiananmen

By JEFFREY WASSERSTON
Los Angeles Times

People from China will often ask me, “Why are Westerners like you so obsessed with what happened in Beijing in 1989?”

I've never had a succinct answer to this question — until now. Next time I'm asked, I'll say, “I may be obsessed with 1989, but China's top leaders are even more obsessed with '89.” The events of that time still reverberate in Beijing's response to the protests racking Hong Kong now.

What scared the government most in 1989 was not students gathering in Tiananmen Square. It was members of many social groups turning out to support those youths in multi-class protests erupted in other cities too. China's leaders were equally alarmed by protests that spread across class lines to topple Communist rule in places like East Germany, Czechoslovakia and Romania.

Haunted by those epochal events, China's top leaders have used quick and brutal methods to crush any movement that strikes them as having the potential to link up people of varied classes in varied locales. That explains the merciless moves against Falun Gong in 1999.

A concern with avoiding another 1989 has also influenced China's top leaders, from Deng Xiaoping to Xi Jinping, in other ways. It has led them to allow some single-issue, single-locale protests so that people can let off steam. At the same time, it has

caused them to increase their efforts to co-opt, control and distract groups, such as students at leading universities, who played central roles in the Tiananmen protests.

It's interesting to me that many of those asking about the West's Tiananmen obsession are students who point out that they weren't even alive then. Many tell me they have seen the famous photograph of the Tank Man, even though it is banned behind the Great Firewall, and they know that soldiers killed civilians near Tiananmen Square on June 4, 1989 — though they avoid using the word “massacre” to characterize the bloodshed.

What puzzles them is that the Tank Man image should loom so large in our imagination, when they believe there are other images — of fast trains, skyscrapers, the Beijing Games, etc. — that better reflect China's exciting trajectory. And they find it curious that Western commentators bring up Tiananmen whenever new protests break out in the Chinese mainland. This year, with the Western media filled with speculation over whether the Hong Kong protests will result in a Tiananmen-style crackdown by Beijing.

While there's abundant evidence that the Chinese government is absolutely willing to use vicious means to suppress dissent — as with the horrific human rights abuses directed at the Uighurs in Xinjiang — it has also been careful to avoid any images that might recall 1989.

Xi, like his predecessors, does not want

the international press to be on the scene when a large number of people are killed. It does not want a new iconic photograph capturing its brutality, 30 years after Tank Man.

Many people have been injured badly and arrested in Hong Kong, but there have been few deaths. And in Xinjiang, the authorities have kept the enormous suffering there out of sight.

Another telling sign of the Chinese leaders' obsession with 1989 is their critical attitude toward Mikhail Gorbachev, whose decisions contributed to the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Like his predecessors, Xi does not want to be seen as China's Gorbachev, the man on whose watch a Communist Party-run empire imploded — and that means proving he has the will to put down any movement that challenges his authority and that of the Communist Party.

History never repeats itself. There are always novel features that keep new events from unfolding exactly like previous ones.

It matters, though, that people often imagine that the past could repeat itself and sometimes actively try to increase or decrease the chance of this happening. When historians of the future tell the story of 2019, they would do well to focus on two things: how the many protests around the world this year differ from those of 1989 and how fear of the revolutions born in that era haunt some contemporary autocrats.

Jeffrey Wasserston is a professor of history at University of California, Irvine and author of the forthcoming “Vigil: Hong Kong on the Brink.”

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Bald eagle smashes into window, flies off

VA NORFOLK — A bald eagle made an unexpected appearance at a Virginia tax preparation office, slamming into a window and then apparently flying off without serious injuries.

The Virginian-Pilot reported the mature bald eagle struck a window at an H&R Block office in Norfolk, leaving a hole nearly three feet wide and scattering glass shards over the office floor.

Harry Patterson Jr., who runs a neighboring insurance office, said he was on the phone when he saw what he thought looked like a stuffed animal.

Patterson said the office is closed until tax season.

Urine sample prompts theater evacuation

WA NORTH BEND — A movie theater in the small Washington city of North Bend was evacuated after authorities said a package labeled as containing a "highly contagious human substance" was sent there in error.

KOMO reported the package contained a urine sample.

Sgt. Paul Graham, with Snoqualmie Police, said the package arrived at the theater and the theater manager found a box with the labeled liquid inside.

The theater was evacuated, and local streets were closed as hazmat crews responded.

Graham said the package was supposed to have been delivered to a medical clinic in Tacoma.

19 people report illness on cruise ship

CA LOS ANGELES — Authorities said 19 people aboard a cruise ship reported flu-like illnesses as they reached a Southern California port.

The Los Angeles Fire Department said authorities were called to evaluate patients after they fell ill on a Norwegian Cruise Line ship.

Authorities said the patients were evaluated and they declined to be taken to the hospital.

The Los Angeles Times reported that paramedics responded to the same ship a week earlier after a report that passengers were ill and four were sent to a hospital for treatment.

Elk gets tangled up in resident's hammock

NC MAGGIE VALLEY — An elk is running around western North Carolina with a shredded hammock on its head, and apparently a love of apples is to blame.

News outlets reported Jim Beaver told the Haywood County Sheriff's Office that thinking that an elk was stuck in his yard with its antlers tangled up in a hammock. The sheriff's office on Facebook says Kip. Ken Stiles climbed onto the roof, cut the hammock and freed the animal.

Beaver said elks often eat apples in his yard and play with his hammock.



SARAH A. MILLER, TYLER (TEXAS) MORNING TELEGRAPH/AP

Christmas around the globe

Livt Ortiz, 8, and Alexis Olson, 8, both of Bullard, Texas, play inside a giant snow globe during the Christmas Kick-off in Bullard on Monday.

Evacuation slide falls from jet nearing airport

MA MILTON — Authorities said no one was hurt when an evacuation slide fell from an airliner into the yard of a suburban Boston home.

A company spokeswoman confirmed to the Boston Herald that the uninflated slide fell from a Delta Air Lines flight from Paris to Boston's Logan International Airport.

The Federal Aviation Administration said the pilot reported a loud noise as the plane approached Logan and landed safely.

Police in Milton south of Boston alerted the FAA that the slide had been found in a resident's yard. Wenhan Huang told The Patriot Ledger he was doing yard work when the slide took out several branches of his Japanese maple.

Man finds ring lost in sand for 50 years

FL WINTER HAVEN — A man using a metal detector on a Florida beach found a high school ring that another man lost nearly 50 years ago. Kenneth Board said he lost the Auburndale High School ring on Cocoa Beach the day after the 1970 senior prom.

The Ledger reported Jerry Pope was sweeping his metal detector across the sand on Melbourne Beach, some 20 miles from Cocoa Beach, when he found the ring. He cleaned the green

THE CENSUS

\$7.5M

The amount a northern Indiana museum received for a 19th-century sculpture at auction. The Ruthmere Museum had owned the 1894 limestone sculpture by French artist Auguste Rodin for more than 40 years. Profits from the sale of the Rodin sculpture, named La Cariatide Tombée Portant Sa Pierre, or The Fallen Caryatid Carrying Her Stone, will help build a \$10 million endowment for the Elkhart, Ind., museum.

growth off of it and discovered the initials "H" or "R" as well as the last initial, "B."

Jake White, a testing coordinator at Auburndale High, took the initials and graduating year and found the match in Board.

Clown sign from closed drive-in to be preserved

NJ WALL — Officials said a clown sign that has smiled on motorists at a now-demolished New Jersey drive-in for two-thirds of a century will be preserved.

N.J.com reported that developers of a strip mall at the Wall Township site said they will donate the Circus Drive-In sign for preservation and display elsewhere.

The Route 35 drive-in, a vestige of car culture with a white-and-red striped roof resembling an old-fashioned circus tent, closed in 2017.

Developer Circus Partners LLC bought the site then, demolished the building last year and last week won planning board approval for the strip mall.

Garage fire displaces people and reptiles

CA OXNARD — Authorities said a fire in a Southern California garage displaced three people and a large number of reptiles.

The Ventura County Star reported that Oxnard firefighters found a dozen or two dozen reptiles after battling an electric fire in a detached garage.

Oxnard Fire Department Battalion Chief Steve McNaughten said the animals included a boa constrictor and a six-foot-long lizard.

He said several animals died in the blaze in the city about 60 miles west of Los Angeles.

Historic hardware store is closing

LA LOGANSPOUT — A 122-year hardware and department store that once saw a visit from Bonnie and Clyde is closing in northwest Louisiana. N.J. Caraway & Co. has been

serving customers in the town of Logansport since 1897.

Store owner Janet Palmer told KSLA-TV she's ready to retire. She's having health issues, and her husband died nine years ago. The couple had run the store for nearly 40 years.

N.J. Caraway & Co. survived two fires and even received a visit from the notorious duo Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow, looking to buy ammunition, which the store didn't sell.

The store's final day of operations will be Dec. 28.

Police kill man who abducted teen girl

PA NANTICOKE — Pennsylvania State Police said officers killed a 20-year-old man who they say stole a police vehicle and abducted a 15-year-old girl.

Citing a news release, Pennsylvania State Police said officers used "deadly force" against Jordan Patrick Oliver late Sunday. The release says Oliver was holding Samara Derwin hostage in a wooded area in Luzerne County. She was unharmed.

Police said Oliver initially held the teen at knifepoint Sunday afternoon at Nanticoke High School. She escaped and was placed in a Nanticoke police cruiser as officers tried to arrest Oliver.

But Oliver sprayed smoke during a struggle and fled with the marked cruiser and girl.

From wire reports

Frazz



Dilbert



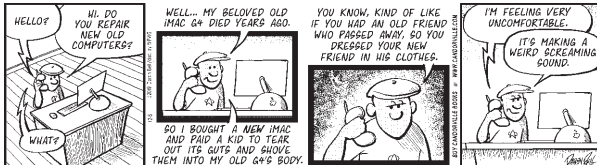
Pearls Before Swine



Non Sequitur



Candorville



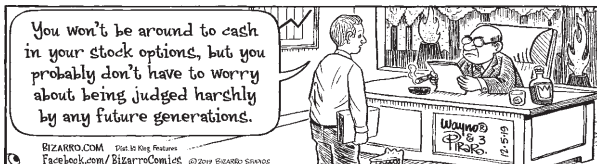
Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12					13				14			
15					16				17			
18					19			20	21			
		22				23					24	25
26	27	28				29			30			
31					32				33			
34			35					36				
37			38					39				
		40						41		42	43	44
45	46				47	48			49			
50					51				52			
53					54				55			

ACROSS

- Jessica of "Dark Angel"
- Sound booster
- Logical
- Tree bump
- jongg
- Despot
- Astronomer Sagan
- Mex. neighbor
- Jazzy James
- Coercion
- Forbidden act
- Separate quarters for a visitor
- Host
- de plume
- Gist
- Melodies
- River blocker
- Classic theaters
- Magnon
- Skippry rival
- "Yum!"
- Weekend visitor
- Singer Braxton
- "Broadway Joe"
- Grand
- Affirmative action?
- Canyon sound
- Pop's sister
- Dead heat

DOWN

- Alphabet quartet
- Hawaiian feast
- "I'm f-f-freezing!"
- Claims
- Tickle
- Pas' mates
- Apparition
- Shorthand pro
- Flabbergasts
- D.C. baseballer
- Historic period
- Take to court
- Resistance unit
- Major mix-up
- Fat
- Vicinity
- Netting
- Ancient
- Ogler's look
- Online auction site
- Apiace
- Painter Joan
- Caesar salad morsels
- Start eating
- Breakfast order
- "I'm f-f-freezing!"
- Claims
- Tickle
- Pas' mates
- Apparition
- Shorthand pro
- Flabbergasts
- D.C. baseballer
- Historic period
- Take to court
- Resistance unit
- Major mix-up
- Fat

Answer to Previous Puzzle

C	A	N		S	R	S
S	A	V	E		E	L
S	T	R	I	P		L
N	E	G	A	T	I	V
O	N	O		U	N	I
			A	N	N	S
			V	I	D	E
			Z	E	R	O
			A	N	I	
			P	O	S	I
			M	E	T	T
			S	T	E	E
			O	R	R	

12-5

CRYPTOQUIP

J X N K T G M D X D D B D X U
Y K C M N X H O D I T A Y U D X
F K V C M Y B D L K F W N - V H O D I
A N G D X A H F W V : F Y L N X - A D J
W Y V D W Y A A .

Yesterday's Cryptquip: WHEN I'M SULKING AND POUTY, WHY AM I SO BAD-TEMPERED? I NEED TO LEARN BETTER MOPING SKILLS.

Today's Cryptquip Clue: F equals M

NBA

Spurs rally for 20T win after Harden's disputed non-dunk

By Raul Dominguez
Associated Press

SAN ANTONIO — James Harden had a slam dunk waved off by officials, the first sign that it might not be the Houston Rockets' night.

Lonnie Walker IV helped make sure of that.

Walker had a career-high 28 points and the San Antonio Spurs overcame Harden's 50 points by rallying from a late 10-point deficit to beat Houston 135-133 in double overtime Tuesday.

Harden played a season-high 49 minutes coming off a 60-point outing Saturday in three quarters against Atlanta, but he was whistled for two charges in the second overtime. The second came against DeMar DeRozan with 0.8 seconds remaining, sealing San Antonio's victory.

That followed a bizarre moment in the fourth quarter, when officials erased Harden's chunk with 7:53 remaining and Houston leading 102-89. Officials ruled the ball didn't clear the cylinder, but crew

chief James Capers said after the game that, "in fact it did clear the net and should have been a successful field goal."

Capers said the Rockets did not ask for a review within the 30-second window that coaches can challenge calls, during which time they were arguing and asking for clarification. The botched call crushed Houston's momentum.

"We just stopped playing and they gained confidence," Harden said.

The Rockets led by 22 in the second half and were up by double digits in the fourth quarter for all but the final 4:18.

Walker, a second-year guard who has been patiently waiting on the bench most of his career, took over in his first extended playing time to fuel the comeback.

"It was confidence," Walker said. "My teammates kept me going, and once I started feeling it, I'm just going to let it go and play my game. I know what I can and cannot do. I'm just happy that we played team ball and we got this win."

DeRozan added 23 points, nine assists and five rebounds as the Spurs won their second straight at home and snapped the Rockets' two-game winning streak.

"They played faster but more sense of urgency than we did, especially being up," Houston point guard Russell Westbrook said.

Harden had six points in the second overtime, including a follow of Clint Capela's missed free throw with 1:41 remaining to put Houston up 131-128. Bryn Forbes tied it at 131 with a three-pointer, and the teams traded free throws the remainder of the game.

In addition to drawing the late charge on Harden, DeRozan was also 3-for-4 on free throws in the final 30 seconds.

"That's who he is, he's the leader of the team," Walker said. "We expect him to score in crunch time and make big plays and that's exactly what he did. He got us this win."

Capela had 22 points and 21 rebounds, and Austin Rivers and Westbrook added 19 points apiece for Houston. Westbrook was 7-



Eric Gam/AP

Spurs guard Lonnie Walker IV, right, is fouled by Rockets guard James Harden during the second half in San Antonio on Tuesday.

for-30 shooting but added 10 assists and 10 rebounds.

The Spurs were without starting power forward LaMarcus Aldridge, who missed his second straight game with a sore right thigh.

San Antonio responded with a group effort to beat the Rockets

four days after knocking off the Los Angeles Clippers at home.

"This is a team that we think we have, we've just got to play like this consistently and we haven't really done that," San Antonio coach Gregg Popovich said. "So, hopefully, we're starting to figure that out."

Roundup

Heat win in OT, hand Raptors first home loss

Associated Press

TORONTO — Jimmy Butler delivered a triple-double to beat Toronto, then turned his focus to Miami's next opponent with an unbeaten home record.

Butler had 22 points, 13 rebounds and 12 assists, Duncan Robinson scored 22 points and the Heat spoiled Kyle Lowry's return to Toronto's lineup by beating the Raptors 121-110 in overtime Tuesday.

"I'm not going to say that this one is more special than any other one," Butler said of Miami's third consecutive win and second straight on the road. "Just two good teams going at it. We were fortunate enough to do our job."

Butler scored eight consecutive points in 55 seconds to begin the extra session as the Heat recovered after blowing a seven-point lead in the final two minutes of the fourth quarter.

When it's closing time, he just makes whatever play is needed," Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said.

Miami also won at Milwaukee on Oct. 26, a 131-126 overtime victory. The Heat are the only road team to beat the Bucks this season.

Miami closes its three-game road trip on Wednesday. The Celtics (7-0) are one of three NBA teams yet to lose at home this season. Philadelphia (10-0) and Miami (8-0) are the others.

"We talked about it: We've got one more to win," Butler said. "We'd better get over this one fairly quickly."

Butler became the 10th player

in Heat history to post a triple-double, achieving the feat for the fifth time.

"He was doing even more stuff that you won't see in the box score: encouraging guys, talking, being in gaps defensively," Miami's Justise Winslow said. "He was fantastic for us."

Lakers 105, Nuggets 96: LeBron James had 25 points, nine assists and a crucial dunk off a miss late in the fourth quarter to lead visiting Los Angeles over Denver.

Anthony Davis shook off flu-like symptoms to score 25 points and add 10 rebounds for the Lakers.

Both teams were coming off losses that ended long winning streaks, but it was Los Angeles that bounced back.

Clippers 117, Trail Blazers 97: Mohamed Hamel scored 26 points. Paul George added 25 and host Los Angeles pulled away in the second half to beat Portland.

Kawhi Leonard added 11 points in helping extend the Clippers' franchise-best start at home to 13.

The game was tied 10 times in the first half before George and Leonard took over to start the third. They each hit three-pointers and George had a steal and a dunk to go with a free throw from Leonard as part of a 13-run that gave the Clippers a 76-62 lead.

Mavericks 118, Pelicans 97: Luka Doncic scored 15 of his 33 points in the third quarter and grabbed 18 rebounds in just 28 minutes to power visiting Dallas over New Orleans.

Doncic shot 9-for-18 from the field, making five three-pointers,



Nathan Denette, The Canadian Press/AP

Heat forward Jimmy Butler drives past Raptors guard Norman Powell during the second half on Tuesday in Toronto.

and hit 10 of 13 free throws to lead the Mavericks to their eighth victory in the past nine games.

Doncic had 12 points the first quarter and then broke open a three-point game by scoring 15 of the Mavericks' 25 points in the final 9:18 of the third. Two of Doncic's jumpers came from at least 25 feet with no defender in his face.

Dallas led by as many as 18 points in the fourth quarter and coasted home.

Magic 127, Wizards 120: Evan Fournier scored 31 points, D.J. Augustin added 16 of his 24 in the fourth quarter and visiting Orlando beat Washington.

Bradley Beal scored 42 points

for the Wizards, who have lost five of six.

Markelle Fultz added a career-high 20 points for the Magic, who have won three of four after earning just their second road victory of the season.

Pistons 127, Cavaliers 94: Blake Griffin scored 24 points, Andre Drummond had 17 points and 14 rebounds, and visiting Detroit routed Cleveland to win consecutive games for the first time this season.

Griffin played just 24 minutes and was 8-for-13 from the field, including 6-for-7 from deep. Drummond played 31 minutes as Detroit's starters were on the bench for the fourth quarter.

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division			
	W	L	Pct
Toronto	15	5	.750
Boston	14	6	.727
Philadelphia	15	6	.714
Brooklyn	10	10	.500
New York	4	17	.190
Southeast Division			
	W	L	Pct
Miami	15	5	.750
Orlando	9	11	.450
Charlotte	8	14	.364
Washington	6	13	.316
Atlanta	16	2	.889
Central Division			
	W	L	Pct
Milwaukee	18	3	.857
Indiana	13	7	.650
Detroit	8	13	.381
Chicago	7	14	.333
Cleveland	5	15	.250

Western Conference

Southwest Division			
	W	L	Pct
Dallas	14	7	.700
Houston	13	7	.650
San Antonio	8	14	.364
Memphis	6	14	.300
New Orleans	6	15	.286
Northwest Division			
	W	L	Pct
Denver	13	5	.722
Utah	12	9	.571
Minnesota	10	9	.526
Moscow	8	11	.421
Oklahoma City	8	12	.391
Pacific Division			
	W	L	Pct
L.A. Lakers	13	5	.722
L.A. Clippers	16	6	.727
Phoenix	9	10	.476
Sacramento	8	11	.421
Golden State	8	18	.182

Monday's games

Philadelphia 103, Utah 94
Phoenix 109, Charlotte 104
Atlanta 104, Golden State 79
Indiana 117, Memphis 104
Milwaukee 132, New York 88
Chicago 113, Sacramento 106

Detroit 127, Cleveland 94
Orlando 127, Washington 120
Dallas 118, New Orleans 97
San Antonio 135, Houston 133
L.A. Lakers 105, Denver 96
L.A. Clippers 117, Portland 90

Wednesday's games
Golden State at Charlotte
Milwaukee at Detroit
Phoenix at Orlando
Brooklyn at Atlanta
Miami at Boston
Indiana at Oklahoma City
Memphis at Chicago
Minnesota at Dallas
L.A. Lakers at Utah
Sacramento at Portland

Thursday's games
Philadelphia at Washington
Denver at New York
Houston at Toronto
Phoenix at New Orleans

COLLEGE BASKETBALL ROUNDUP

No. 1 Louisville shuts down No. 4 Michigan

Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Louisville players and coach Chris Mack cared more about protecting the basket against Michigan than defending their new perch atop the rankings.

Fulfilling that priority helped the Cardinals succeed in their season debut as the nation's No. 1 team.

Jordan Nwora had 22 points and 12 rebounds, and Louisville held No. 4 Michigan to a season-low 26% shooting mark for a 58-43 victory Tuesday night in its first game since returning to No. 1.

The Cardinals (8-0) shot just 37% but their defense stifled Michigan (7-1) much of the night as they earned a signature victory in the Big Ten/ACC Challenge one day after claiming the top spot in the AP Top 25 for the first time in six years. Though their second-year coach has downplayed rankings, the win was significant for a program he has guided back into the national championship discussion following a sex scandal and the school's involvement in a federal corruption investigation of college basketball.

Players seem more focused on building on it.

"Our season's not over yet," Cardinals guard Lamarr Kimble said. "No. 1's just a number. We're going to continue to get better."

As for Mack, he was most satisfied with how his team denied just about everything Michigan attempted while passing or shooting, holding the Wolverines to just better than half their scoring average (82.4 points per game). That mattered on a night when baskets were nearly as hard to come by for the Cardinals.

"The story of the game was just our defensive effort, from the beginning of the game all the way through," Mack said. "We probably played 38½ minutes as good a defense as we can play, outside of maybe the first minute of the second half."

Louisville answered the Wolverines' 6-0 spurt that got them to 30-26 with a 10-0 run keyed by six points and a couple of pivotal rebounds from Nwora, who tied his season high on the boards.

"That's really been a big focus for us, being strong on D," Nwora said.

The Cardinals also kept the Wolverines and first-year coach Juwan Howard from adding another top-10 upset to the ones that helped them enter the Top 25 and match Kansas (1989) for the biggest jump from being unranked in the 70-year history of the poll.

"Give them credit," Howard said. "They do a great job of defending. Unfortunately, they did a good job of keeping us out of the paint."



TIMOTHY D. EASLEY/AP

Louisville's Malik Williams attempts to block the shot of Michigan's Xavier Simpson during the second half on Tuesday. Louisville won 58-43.

Steven Enoch had 10 points and 10 rebounds, and Dwayne Sutton pulled down 11 boards as Louisville topped Michigan 48-41 in that category.

Jon Teske had 18 points and 10 rebounds for the Wolverines, who were seeking their first victory over a No. 1 team since beating Duke 81-73 at home on Dec. 13, 1997.

No. 10 Duke 87, No. 11 Michigan State 75: Vernon Carey Jr. showed the Spartans exactly what they're missing.

Carey had 26 points, 11 rebounds and three blocks to help visiting Duke dominate Michigan State.

The 6-foot-10, 270-pound freshman was

recruited hard by Michigan State and seemed very interested in attending the school, but ended up signing with the Blue Devils and came back to haunt coach Tom Izzo.

"He's a load in there," Izzo said.

Duke (8-1) looked like one of the top teams in the country and not a rebuilding one a week after losing at home to Stephen F. Austin.

"If we played like this last week, we would've won two games instead of one," coach Mike Krzyzewski said. "But we didn't have to be learning."

Blue Devils guard Tre Jones scored 20

points, matched a career high with 12 assists and made three steals as part of a defensive effort that forced several turnovers early in the game and a total of 14.

Meanwhile, the Spartans (5-3) went into the game "a little fragile," according to coach Tom Izzo, and they looked out of sync and overmatched.

Cassius Winston had 12 points on 4-for-14 shooting for Michigan State.

No. 15 Memphis 71, Bradley 56: Alex Lomax scored 17 points, Boogie Ellis added 12 and the host Tigers overcame a poor shooting performance to beat the Braves.

Memphis made 36% of its shots from the field, but Bradley (5-3) was considerably worse, hitting 27%, going just 2-for-23 outside the three-point arc.

Tyler Harris and DJ Jeffries had 10 points apiece for Memphis (7-1).

Indiana 80, No. 17 Florida State 64: Devonte Green scored a career-high 30 points and Trayce Jackson-Davis added 15, leading the undefeated Hoosiers past the visiting Seminoles in the Big Ten/ACC Challenge.

Indiana is 8-0 for the first time since 2012-13 and has beaten three straight ranked opponents under coach Archie Miller. The previous two came last season.

Trent Forrest had 13 points as the Seminoles' seven-game winning streak ended.

No. 18 Baylor 78, Maryland Eastern Shore 46: Jared Butler made six three-pointers and scored 20 points, Devonte Bando added 14 points and the host Bears led throughout against the winless Hawks.

Baylor (6-1) played for the first time in nine days, since a win over then-No. 17 Villanova for the championship at the Myrtle Beach Invitational, where it won three games in four days.

No. 19 Dayton 99, Houston Baptist 68: Obi Toppin scored 17 points and had a soaring, one-hand slam off one of his 10 rebounds, and the host Flyers celebrated their return to the rankings by beating the Huskies.

Dayton (6-1) vaulted into the Top 25 after an impressive run at the Maui Invitational that included drubbings of Georgia and Virginia Tech followed by an overtime loss to Kansas in the title game. Dayton hadn't been ranked in the Top 25 since February 2016.

Toppin finished with his third double-double of the season in only 24 minutes.

No. 24 Butler 67, Mississippi 58: Kamar Baldwin scored 31 points, helping the Bulldogs remain unbeaten with a victory over the host Rebels.

Baldwin shot 11-for-16 from the field, including 4-for-5 from three-point range, to lead Butler (8-0). He added six rebounds and three assists.



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STAR

NHL

Devils fire Hynes after dismal start

Associated Press

NEWARK, N.J. — John Hynes paid the price for the New Jersey Devils failing to deliver on the high expectations created by having three No. 1 overall draft picks in the lineup.

Hynes was fired as coach Tuesday after a 9-13-4 start that left the team in last place in the Metropolitan Division and with the NHL's second-worst record.

General manager Ray Shero announced the move roughly 20 minutes before Hynes was scheduled to speak to the media before the Devils' game against the Vegas Golden Knights. Hynes had been coach for four-plus seasons.

Shero said assistant Alain Nasreddine would become the interim coach and Peter Horachek, a pro scout for the team, would join the coaching staff as an assistant.

The dismissal comes a day after the Devils were ripped by the Buffalo Sabres 7-1, a game Shero said was hard to describe. That followed a 4-0 loss at home to the rival New York Rangers on Saturday.

Shero said he made his decision to fire Hynes after the Buffalo game, adding the team's inconsistency and inability to hold leads all season contributed to his disappointment that began with an 0-4-2 record after six games.

"I don't think there is any one player performing even at the level let alone above that we would expect or they would expect," Shero said. "That's the thing that is disappointing. Obviously change brings opportunity not only for Alain Nasreddine but also for our players. It's opportunity for them and to find out where we are and where we are going to go."

Shero said Nasreddine would be given a chance to turn things around, adding there is a lot of time left in the season.

Nasreddine said he was in shock when Shero informed him of the change, calling it a bittersweet moment since Hynes had been his mentor for the last decade.

"I think everyone in that room is disappointed," Nasreddine said of the team. "Everyone in that room feels responsible. Everyone in that room can be better."

The Devils had high hopes entering the season after drafting Jack Hughes with the No. 1 overall pick just two years after taking Nico Hirschier with the No. 1 pick. The other first overall pick on the roster is Taylor Hall, who won the league MVP award in 2018 after leading New Jersey to the Stanley Cup.

The Devils are the third team to change coaches this season. Toronto fired Mike Babcock two weeks ago and Calgary parted way with Bill Peters last week.

Hynes, who was hired by the Devils in June 2015, had a 150-145 record in 354 career regular-season games. When

New Jersey made the postseason in '18, it was the first time since going to the Stanley Cup Final in 2012.

Hynes ranks second in team history in games coached, wins and points (345).

"John played an integral role in the development of this team in establishing a foundation for our future and we are grateful for his commitment, passion and unmatched work ethic," Shero said in a statement. "John is a respected leader, developer of talent and friend which makes this decision difficult. We are a team who values and takes pride in accountability to the results we produce."

Nasreddine played for six different NHL organizations during his 15-year pro career with Chicago, Edmonton, Florida, Montreal, the Islanders and Pittsburgh.

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division									
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA		
Boston	29	19	3	5	51	85	62		
Florida	27	13	9	5	31	96	97		
Winnipeg	27	17	10	0	35	52	77		
Montreal	28	12	10	6	30	93	98		
Philadelphia	29	12	13	4	30	84	96		
Tampa Bay	28	16	11	3	29	91	81		
Ottawa	28	11	16	1	23	71	89		
Pittsburgh	29	10	17	2	22	84	98		

Metropolitan Division									
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA		
Washington	29	18	5	6	51	109	85		
N.Y. Islanders	26	18	6	2	38	77	63		
Philadelphia	29	17	10	2	35	52	77		
Carolina	26	16	11	1	33	88	78		
Pittsburgh	27	14	9	4	32	83	78		
N.Y. Rangers	28	13	10	3	29	84	87		
Columbus	27	11	12	4	26	88	84		
New Jersey	27	9	14	4	22	59	101		

Western Conference

Central Division									
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA		
St. Louis	29	18	5	6	42	90	75		
Minnesota	29	17	10	2	35	52	77		
Colorado	26	16	8	2	34	97	75		
Dallas	29	13	11	4	31	76	73		
Minnesota	29	13	10	3	29	84	87		
Nashville	27	12	10	5	29	88	88		
Chicago	27	10	12	5	25	74	85		

Pacific Division									
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA		
Edmonton	29	18	5	6	42	90	75		
Arizona	29	16	9	4	36	82	69		
Vegas	29	15	10	4	32	86	76		
Vancouver	29	14	11	4	32	97	86		
San Jose	29	15	13	1	31	84	96		
Calgary	29	13	12	4	30	72	86		
Anaheim	28	12	12	4	28	84	97		
L.A. Kings	27	10	15	2	24	72	80		

Note: Two points for a win, one point for an overtime loss, zero points for a regulation loss. Records are through Wednesday's games.

Monday's games
Vegas 4, N.Y. Rangers 1
Florida 7, New Jersey 2

Tuesday's games
Montreal 4, N.Y. Islanders 2
St. Louis 4, Chicago 2

Wednesday's games
Washington 5, Florida 2
Boston 2, Carolina 0

Thursday's games
Arizona 4, Columbus 2
Philadelphia 6, Toronto 1

Friday's games
Tampa Bay 3, Nashville 2, OT
Vancouver 5, Ottawa 2

Saturday's games
St. Louis 4, Pittsburgh 0
Colorado 4, Dallas 2

Sunday's games
Chicago at New Jersey
Montreal at N.Y. Rangers

Monday's games
Arizona at Pittsburgh
Los Angeles at Edmonton

Tuesday's games
Washington at Anaheim
Edmonton at Dallas



KATHY WILLEMS/AP

The Golden Knights' Jonathan Marchessault, far left, celebrates with William Karlsson, center, and Nicolas Hague as Reilly Smith skates toward them to join in after Marchessault scored the first of his three goals during the third period on Tuesday. The Golden Knights defeated the Devils 4-3.

Roundup

Marchessault's hat trick leads Knights past Devils

Associated Press

NEWARK, N.J. — Jonathan Marchessault gave the Devils' day of change an all-too-familiar ending.

Marchessault scored three straight goals in the third period to rally the Vegas Golden Knights over New Jersey 4-3 Tuesday night, hours after the Devils fired coach John Hynes.

Marchessault scored twice in the first 5:04 of the third to give the Golden Knights a 3-2 lead. He added a power-play goal midway through the period, and Vegas held on even after New Jersey's Nico Hirschier scored 20 seconds later.

The Golden Knights have won four straight to improve to 15-11-4.

"It's fun," Marchessault said. "We didn't have that all year so far, so it's good that we get on a roll."

Malcolm Subban had 32 saves, and Chandler Stephenson scored in his first game since being acquired Monday from the Washington Capitals.

Mackenzie Blackwood stopped 26 shots for the Devils. Kyle Palmieri and Jesper Bratt also scored.

Hynes was fired Tuesday after a 9-13-4 start that left the team in last place in the Metropolitan Division and with the NHL's second-worst record.

General manager Ray Shero named assistant Alain Nasreddine the interim coach, and Peter Horachek, a pro scout for the team, joined the coaching staff as an assistant.

Subban has been playing for Marc-Andre Fleury, who has been away from the team for the past week with a family illness.

"It's been huge. Obviously, you get a couple wins you feel better about yourself, you feel good about your game, so it's been great obviously," Subban said. "Still stuff to

work on, but it's coming along so it feels good right now."

Capitals 5, Sharks 2: John Carlson had a goal and two assists in the opening period to reach 40 points for the season, Nick Hathaway and Jakob Vrana each scored twice and visiting Washington beat San Jose.

Carlson had a hand in all three Washington goals during a span of 3:01 in the first period that put the Capitals in control in the opener of their three-game California swing. He assisted on the first goal of the game for both Hathaway and Vrana and then scored his own, giving him nine goals and 31 assists through 29 games this season.

Carlson joined Bobby Orr and Al MacInnis as the only defensemen in the expansion era to reach 40 points in the first 30 games of a season.

Flyers 6, Maple Leafs 1: Claude Giroux scored the go-ahead goal midway through the third period and host Philadelphia had three goals in the final 2:06 to get its fifth straight win.

Travis Konecny had a goal and an assist for Philadelphia, which has earned points in seven straight games (6-0-1). The Flyers had an NHL-best 24 points in November, going 10-2-4 to tie a franchise record for most points in a month.

Canadians 4, Islanders 2: Philip Danault, Brendan Gallagher and Shea Weber each had a goal and an assist, and host Montreal beat New York to snap an eight-game losing streak.

Jeff Petry also scored and Carey Price stopped 21 shots to earn his 11th win of the season for Montreal, which ended an 0-5-3 skid.

Lightning 3, Predators 2 (OT): Nikita Kucherov scored at 2:35 of overtime to give visiting Tampa Bay a victory over Nashville.

Victor Hedman and Ondrej

Palat also scored and Andrei Vasilevsky stopped 30 shots as the Lightning snapped a three-game skid.

Bruins 2, Hurricanes 0: Charlie Coyle scored late in the third period, Jaroslav Halak stopped 24 shots for his second shutout of the season, and host Boston beat Carolina for its eighth straight win.

David Krejci also scored for Boston, just 1:08 after Coyle got the Bruins on the scoreboard.

Jets 5, Stars 1: Kyle Connor had a goal and two assists, and host Winnipeg handed Dallas its fourth straight loss.

Nikolaj Ehlers, Josh Morrissey, Patrik Laine and Mark Scheifele each had a goal and assist for Winnipeg, which is 4-1-0 in its past five games.

Miro Heiskanen scored for the Stars, who are 0-3-1 since ending a seven-game winning streak.

Coyotes 4, Blue Jackets 2: Darcy Kuemper stopped 33 shots and visiting Arizona beat Columbus behind goals by Clayton Keller, Christian Fischer and Lawton Crouse.

Carl Soderberg had an empty-net goal and assisted on two of the earlier goals.

Wild 4, Panthers 2: Carson Soucy scored the go-ahead goal early in the third period to lift visiting Minnesota over Florida.

Luke Kunin, Mats Zuccarello and Jason Zucker also scored as the Wild won their fourth straight game and earned a point for the 10th straight game (7-0-3).

Canucks 5, Senators 2: Antoine Roussel scored in his first game back after being sidelined for eight months with an injury, and host Vancouver beat Ottawa.

Zack MacEwen got his first NHL goal, and Tanner Pearson, Elias Pettersson and Oscar Panthenberg also scored for Vancouver, which won for just the fifth time in 15 games (5-8-2).

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Ohio State still No. 1 in playoff rankings

Utah, Oklahoma, Baylor hoping to make a case in title games

By RALPH D. RUSSO
Associated Press

Ohio State will go into championship weekend as the top team in the College Football Playoff selection committee's rankings, followed by LSU, Clemson and Georgia.

Utah, Oklahoma and Baylor are on deck, and that could turn out to be the great debate by Saturday night.

Utah was fifth, Oklahoma sixth and Baylor seventh in the committee's second-to-last top 25 released Tuesday. The final rankings to set the pairings for the national semifinals come out Sunday after each FBS conference plays a championship game. The most pivotal games will be LSU-Georgia in the Southeastern Conference championship game Saturday; Oklahoma-Baylor in the Big 12 championship Saturday; and Utah-Oregon — 13th this week — for the Pac-12 title Friday night.

CFP rankings

Dec. 3

	Record
1. Ohio State.....	12-0
2. LSU.....	12-0
3. Clemson.....	12-0
4. Georgia.....	11-1
5. Utah.....	11-1
6. Oklahoma.....	11-1
7. Baylor.....	11-1
8. Wisconsin.....	10-2
9. Florida.....	10-2
10. Penn St.....	10-2
11. Auburn.....	9-3
12. Alabama.....	10-2
13. Oregon.....	10-2
14. Michigan.....	9-3
15. Notre Dame.....	10-2
16. Iowa.....	9-3
17. Memphis.....	11-1
18. Minnesota.....	10-2
19. Boise State.....	11-1
20. Cincinnati.....	10-2
21. Appalachian State.....	11-1
22. Southern Cal.....	8-4
23. Virginia.....	9-3
24. Navy.....	9-2
25. Oklahoma State.....	8-4

The playoff semifinals match the No. 1 seed vs. the No. 4 seed, and No. 2 will face No. 3. The semifinals will be hosted at the Peach Bowl and Fiesta Bowl on Dec. 28. The championship game will be played on Jan. 13, 2020 at New Orleans.

What next?

A team has never lost its conference championship game and made the College Football Playoff. Conventional wisdom suggests that could happen this season with LSU and Ohio State. Clemson might be in the same situation, but a loss to a four-touchdown underdog might give the committee some pause. It is also really unlikely Clemson will lose to Virginia, so let's not waste too much energy debating that unlikely hypothetical.

In a world where the undefeated Tigers (orange), Buckeyes and Tigers (purple) stay undefeated, the fourth and final playoff spot

could become a Pac-12 vs. Big 12 debate.

Utah appears to be on deck to slide into No. 4 if Georgia is bounced, but Oklahoma and Baylor are lurking.

Committee chairman Rob Mullen, the athletic director at Oregon, said the most vigorous debate among the 13-member panel this week was between the Utes and Sooners.

"We spent considerable time on it. More time than anywhere else on the board," Mullen said.

How the games play out this weekend while the committee is watching, all together at a resort hotel in Grapevine, Texas, could swing the decision. But here are the resumes going in:



PAUL SANCYA/AP

Ohio State linebackers Tuf Borland, left, Davon Hamilton, center, and Malik Harrison smother Michigan running back Hassan Haskins during the Buckeyes' 56-27 rout last Saturday in Ann Arbor, Mich.

Utah (11-1)

Victories against CFP ranked teams — 0.

Victories against .500 or better FBS — 5.

Victories against 8 wins or more FBS — 0.

Loss — at USC (8-4), 30-23.

Average scoring margin — 23.7 (5th in FBS).

Offense (yards per play) — 6.91 (9th in FBS).

Defense (yards per play) — 4.20 (4th in FBS).

Analytics/computer ratings

ESPN FPI — 11th.

SP+ — 7th.

FEI — 6th.

SRS — 6th.

Sagarin — 9th (strength of schedule 54th).

Oklahoma (11-1)

Victories against CFP ranked teams — 2.

Victories against FBS .500 or better — 5.

Victories against FBS 8 wins or more — 3.

Loss — at Kansas State (8-4), 48-41.

Average scoring margin — 16.4 (12th in FBS).

Offense (yards per play) — 8.36 (1st in FBS).

Defense (yards per play) — 5.33 (42nd in FBS).

Analytics/computer ratings

ESPN FPI — 8th.

SP+ — 6th.

FEI — 8th.

SRS — 8th.

Sagarin — 6th (strength of schedule 22nd).

Baylor (11-1)

Victories against CFP ranked teams — 1.

Victories against FBS .500 or better — 4.

Victories against FBS 8 wins or more — 2.

Loss — vs. Oklahoma (11-1), 34-31.

Average scoring margin — 15.8 (16th in FBS).

Offense (yards per play) — 6.56 (17th in FBS).

Defense (yards per play) — 4.77 (18th in FBS).

Analytics/computer ratings

ESPN FPI — 15th.

SP+ — 14th.

FEI — 14th.

SRS — 17th.

Sagarin — 15th (strength of schedule 42nd).

Injuries, ejection drain No. 4 Georgia for SEC title game

By CHARLES ODUM
Associated Press

ATLANTA — Jake Fromm may be relying on some new starters around him when the SEC title — and a spot in the playoff — is on the line for No. 4 Georgia.

Fromm insists Georgia's offense will be ready for Saturday's Southeastern Conference championship game against top-ranked LSU.

Despite Fromm's optimism, there's reason for concern.

Leading receiver Lawrence Cager had shoulder surgery late last week and may be done for the season. When announcing the injury after a 52-7 rout of Georgia Tech, coach Kirby Smart said Cager would make a full recovery but is doubtful for a bowl or playoff game.

Georgia (11-1, No. 4 College Football Playoff) also lost another

top receiver, George Pickens, for the first half of the SEC title game. Pickens was ejected in the second half against Georgia Tech for throwing a punch.

That's a significant drain on the Bulldogs' depth at wide receiver. "We're ready," Fromm insisted. "Guys are ready to step up and fill that role."

Pickens was held out in the first half against Georgia Tech as punishment for an undisclosed violation of team rules. Then the freshman landed in a fight with Georgia Tech cornerback Tre Swilling.

Cager and Pickens are tied for the team lead with 33 catches. Pickens' total includes a 41-yard touchdown grab against the Yellow Jackets.

Fromm has struggled recently even with a full cast of receivers. He enters his third straight SEC championship game having failed

to complete half of his passes in four consecutive games.

Fromm had a slow start against Georgia Tech with four straight incompletions but finished strong, matching his high with four touchdown passes. He completed 14 of 29 passes for 254 yards. Georgia's offense was handed yet another blow when top rusher D'Andre Swift went out with a shoulder contusion in the third quarter. Smart downplayed the injury and said he is counting on Swift to play against LSU.

"We expect D'Andre to be fine," Smart said Sunday.

LSU (12-0, No. 2 CFP) rolled into the SEC title game for the first time since 2011 with perhaps its most complete performance of the season, a 50-7 rout of Texas A&M.

The week before, Georgia struggled to beat the Aggies 19-13.



JOHN AMIS/AP

Referees separate Georgia wide receiver George Pickens, foreground, and Georgia Tech defensive back Tre Swilling during a scuffle in the end zone Saturday in Atlanta. Pickens was ejected for throwing a punch and will also miss the first half of this weekend's SEC championship game against LSU.

NFL



MICHAEL AINSWORTH/AP

Two-time rushing champion Ezekiel Elliott, left, is likely to finish without a rushing title in a full season for the first time in his four-year tenure with the Cowboys.

Cowboys still confident despite underachieving

By SCHUYLER DIXON
Associated Press

FRISCO, Texas — The only other time the Dallas Cowboys started 3-0 and missed the playoffs, Jason Witten was a sixth-year tight end for a team that had the top seed in the NFC the previous year and was eager to atone for a crushing divisional-round loss.

Witten is still around 11 years later after coming out of retirement because he thought Dallas was good enough for him to achieve one of the few things that had eluded him for 15 years: a trip to the Super Bowl.

Winning the first three games fueled the lofty chatter, only to be followed by six losses in nine games with the Cowboys set to visit Chicago on Thursday night in a matchup of 6-6 teams having disappointing years coming off postseason appearances.

If there's a common denominator in faltering under the weight of high expectations for what could now be the only two Dallas teams to miss the playoffs after 3-0 starts, Witten doesn't see it. Besides which, the Cowboys still lead the NFC East despite their frequent stumbles.

"First of all, I think that's a good thing when there's high expectations for them," Witten said. "I think if a team allows for outside expectations to be higher than what they have for themselves, then you have a problem."

"That's what I think, yeah, you're frustrated, yeah, you're disappointed. Trust me, whatever the fans are disappointed, we feel that."



Dallas Cowboys (6-6)
at Chicago Bears (6-6)

AFC-N Sports
2:20 a.m. Friday CET
10:20 a.m. Friday JKT

Star running back Ezekiel Elliott says the Cowboys are feeling a little angry as well, which the two-time rushing champion said created some chippiness Sunday in the first practice after a 26-15 loss to Buffalo on Thanksgiving.

Elliott's teammates agreed to varying degrees on how spirited practices have been for a team that has underachieved for weeks and simply hasn't been able to shake the inconsistency. There was a loss to the then-winless New York Jets, which the Cowboys answered by blowing out Philadelphia with first place in the NFC East on the line.

Special teams mistakes in a rainy and windy 13-9 loss at New England set off owner Jerry Jones, who ripped the coaching staff in what became the latest saga over the often-discussed future of coach Jason Garrett.

Dallas looked as if it had another answer with a quick start against the Bills, only to get outscored 26-0 over a 50-minute stretch, prompting a more calm Jones to back his coach and extol certain "dreams" of a late-season

run to the Super Bowl. Amid the wild fluctuations, quarterback Dak Prescott says he remains calm and confident.

"I've faced adversity a lot in my life and on the field and at this moment I'm just doubling down on myself and my teammates," Prescott said. "I've got confidence in what I can do and what these guys around me can do and hope they're looking my way."

Dallas hasn't been past the divisional round since the last of the franchise's five Super Bowl titles to finish the 1995 season. The sixth straight divisional loss came last year at the Los Angeles Rams for the defending division champion.

Elliott, who is likely to finish without a rushing title in a full season for the first time, has grown weary of the search for theories of what ails the Cowboys.

That includes the question of weighty expectations that also grew out of the 2016 All-Pro ending a preseason-long holdout the morning of the first full practice of the season by signing a \$90 million extension. Elliott was viewed as the one missing piece in training camp.

"I wouldn't say it's weighing on us," said Elliott, who is on a surge game stretch without a 100-yard game, the first time that's happened in the same season in his four years as a pro.

"Everyone wants to try to find out what's wrong. I'll tell you what's wrong. We just haven't played good football. We haven't gone off there and executed as a team. Until we do that, it's going to be tough to win ballgames."

Weekly statistics

AFC individual leaders

Week 13				
Quarterbacks				
Player	Att	Com	Yds	TD Int
Rivers, LAC	445	288	3434	17 15
Brady, NE	386	257	3287	23 6
D. Watson, HOU	386	267	3263	23 3
Mahomes, KC	352	227	2983	20 2
Mayfield, CLE	307	204	2917	17 4
D. Carr, OAK	367	259	2843	16 8
Josh Allen, BUF	366	225	2991	16 8
L. Jackson, BAL	322	214	2532	25 5
Dalton, CIN	375	226	2495	10 8
Minshew, JAC	334	204	2432	14 5
Rushers				
Player	Att	Yds	Avg	LG TD
N. Chubb, CLE	238	1175	4.9	88T 7
D. Henry, TEN	227	1140	4.9	74T 11
J. Jacobs, OAK	218	1061	4.9	71 7
Fournette, JAC	220	989	4.5	81 3
L. Jackson, BAL	190	977	7.0	67L 7
M. Mack, IND	192	862	4.5	63T 4
C. Hyde, HOU	184	853	4.6	58 4
M. Ingram, BAL	166	837	5.0	53 4
Lindsay, DEN	164	766	4.7	40 5
Michel, NE	184	645	3.5	26 6
Receivers				
Player	Att	Yds	Avg	LG TD
Kelce, KC	68	923	13.6	47 4
J. Landry, CLE	65	919	14.1	65 5
Edelman, NE	82	915	11.2	44 5
C. Sutton, DEN	54	906	16.8	70T 6
D. Hopkins, HOU	86	903	10.5	38 6
Jo Brown, BUF	88	882	14.5	60T 6
Chark, JAC	74	854	11.5	69 8
K. Haskins, CIN	76	864	11.4	66 8
D. Parker, MIA	53	854	16.1	50 6
Waller, OAK	68	807	12.2	48 3
punters				
Player	Att	Yds	Avg	LG TD
T. Long, LAC	62	935	70.4	47 3
Kern, TEN	50	2330	71.4	46 4
A. Cole, OAK	50	2310	60.2	42 6
Gerry, PIT	55	2534	62.4	41 6
L. Edgerton, NYJ	40	3173	60.6	40 6
Conce, JAC	58	2656	61.4	45 8
Sanchez, IND	43	1947	60.2	40 5
Huach, MIA	55	2470	61.4	40 5
Berrios, NYJ	66	2961	65.4	44 9
Punt returns				
Player	Att	Yds	Avg	Long TD
Barry, NE	15	151	10.1	26 0
D. Carter, HOU	18	171	9.5	23 0
Olsewski, NE	20	179	9.0	22 0
Spiller, DEN	21	172	8.2	42 0
A. Roberts, BUF	24	172	7.2	22 0
Westbrook, JAC	13	116	6.3	41 0
King, LAC	16	96	6.0	68T 1
Erickson, CIN	19	113	5.9	15 0
Kickoff returns				
Player	Att	Yds	Avg	Long TD
B. Wilson, CIN	20	622	31.2	99 1
A. Roberts, BUF	17	482	28.4	60 1
Grant, MIA	23	578	25.1	101T 1
J. Erdman, KC	19	507	23.0	34 0
Trevor Davis, OAK	19	411	21.6	52 0
Scoring				
Player	TD	Rush	Rst	Pts
D. Henry, TEN	23	25	29	512
M. Ingram, BAL	12	9	3	74
Eskler, LAC	8	8	0	60
Jo Brown, BUF	8	8	0	60
Chark, JAC	8	8	0	50
M. Mack, IND	8	8	0	50
N. Chubb, CLE	7	7	0	42
Fells, HOU	7	7	0	42
L. Jackson, BAL	7	7	0	42
J. Jacobs, OAK	7	7	0	42
Kicking				
Player	PAT	FG	LG	Pts
Butker, KC	23	25	29	512
Tucker, BAL	44	25	23	51
Boswell, PIT	23	23	23	51
O. Claiborne, BUF	35	48	127	51
C. Manu, DEN	16	17	22	52
M. Adams, BUF	30	13	25	52
Fairbairn, HOU	13	15	20	52
Vinatieri, IND	22	18	17	55
Hauschka, BUF	26	28	15	59
Bullock, CIN	18	28	17	48

AFC team statistics

Week 13				
AVERAGE PER GAME				
OFFENSE				
Team	Yards	Rush	Pass	Points
Baltimore	420.8	207.8	212.9	29.2
Kansas City	384.7	185.4	200.2	29.2
Houston	372.8	129.8	243.0	30.0
L.A. Chargers	367.8	162.7	205.1	28.5
New England	360.8	96.3	264.5	28.0
Jacksonville	359.4	133.4	226.0	26.0
Indianapolis	351.1	122.7	228.4	25.0
Buffalo	353.0	137.9	215.1	25.0
Denver	347.2	122.9	224.3	25.0
Indianapolis	343.8	130.0	213.8	24.0
Tennessee	329.8	125.4	204.3	24.0
Hincinnati	301.2	78.0	223.0	24.0
Denver	295.8	108.3	187.5	24.0
Philadelphia	266.8	131.5	135.3	20.0
Miami	276.8	62.8	214.0	21.0
N.Y. Jets	262.8	78.2	194.2	20.0
DEFENSE				
Team	Yards	Rush	Pass	Points
New England	300.1	104.2	195.8	18.0
Buffalo	319.2	109.9	199.3	18.0
Cleveland	313.2	124.0	189.2	18.0
N.Y. Jets	305.7	117.5	188.2	18.0
Baltimore	324.4	119.9	204.5	18.0
Denver	324.2	113.7	210.6	18.0
Indianapolis	328.7	110.8	217.9	18.0
Pittsburgh	314.2	124.0	190.2	18.0
Jacksonville	360.4	136.6	223.8	18.0
Oakland	344.0	116.6	227.4	18.0
Tennessee	362.1	120.0	262.1	18.0
Kansas City	327.1	141.3	185.8	18.0
Miami	329.0	141.3	187.7	18.0
Philadelphia	399.7	143.5	256.2	18.0
Cincinnati	405.0	157.6	247.4	18.0

NFC individual leaders

Week 13				
Quarterbacks				
Player	Att	Com	Yds	TD Int
Prescott, DAL	447	298	3788	23 11
Winston, TAM	427	267	3705	17 4
Goff, LA	453	283	3419	13 12
Ryan, ATL	447	301	3246	20 12
Deshaun Watson, SEA	407	244	2917	17 4
Garoppo, GBY	413	266	3065	22 12
Drew Brees, NO	348	232	2822	23 14
Rodriguez, MINF	358	247	2896	21 10
K. Murray, ARI	427	272	2866	14 6
Wentz, PHI	337	244	2440	10 9
Rushers				
Player	Att	Yds	Avg	LG TD
McCaffrey, CAR	235	1167	5.0	84T 12
D. Cook, MIN	225	1046	4.7	75T 12
E. Elliott, DAL	222	980	4.4	75 12
A. Jones, GBY	228	985	4.3	29 14
Carson, SEA	231	981	4.2	59 8
G. Irvan, MIN	198	948	4.8	71 7
Garley, LA	154	642	4.2	28 5
A. Peterson, WAS	147	642	4.4	28 5
Montgomery, CHI	172	594	3.5	56 5
Kamara, NO	125	587	4.7	30 1
Barkeley, NYG	137	544	4.0	59 3
Receivers				
Player	Att	Yds	Avg	LG TD
M. Thomas, NO	110	1290	11.7	42 6
Godwin, TAM	74	1121	15.1	71T 9
M. Evans, TAM	66	1006	16.6	67T 7
D. Moore, CAR	74	980	13.2	52T 4
A. Cooper, DAL	48	913	19.0	71 5
Jo Jones, ATL	64	950	14.8	54T 4
Golladay, DET	47	950	20.2	75T 9
Kupp, LA	73	943	12.9	69 6
S. Diggs, MIN	50	905	18.1	66 5
A. Robinson, CHI	50	905	18.1	66 5
Punters				
Player	Att	Yds	Avg	Long TD
Cohen, CHI	25	298	79.2	44 0
D. Harris, NO	25	232	9.3	53T 1
Barner, ATL	30	225	7.5	42 0
J. James, SF	30	225	7.5	42 0
Natson, LA	19	149	7.8	35 0
J. Knevel, DET	19	149	7.8	35 0
Quinn, WAS	16	78	4.9	15 0
Bobo Wilson, TAM	18	128	7.1	41 0
Kickoff returns				
Player	Att	Yds	Avg	Long TD
Patterson, CHI	23	711	30.9	100T 1
Agnew, DET	17	454	26.7	100T 1
A. Sims, WAS	17	454	26.7	100T 1
Latimer, NYG	17	396	23.3	50 1
D. Harris, NO	15	339	22.6	46 0
J. James, SF	15	292	19.5	46 0
Scoring				
Player	TD	Rush	Rst	Pts
McCaffrey, CAR	16	12	4	98
J. Jones, GBY	10	12	4	98
G. Irvan, MIN	12	12	0	72
Godwin, TAM	9	9	0	54
Golladay, DET	9	9	0	54
Garley, LA	8	8	1	54
M. Jones, DET	8	8	1	54
E. Elliott, DAL	8	7	1	48
Barbery, TAM	7	7	0	42
M. Evans, TAM	7	7	0	42
Kicking				
Player	PAT	FG	LG	Pts
Lutz, NO	29	30	27	58
Gonzalez, DAL	37	17	105	71T 7
Gay, TAM	29	34	33	58
Zuerlein, LA	28	22	28	58
Prater, DET	28	22	26	55
Maher, DAL	33	33	19	63
Garland, WAS	33	33	19	63
M. Crosby, CAR	25	29	19	55
M. Crosby, GBY	33	33	14	54

NFC team statistics

Week 13				
AVERAGE PER GAME				
OFFENSE				
	Yards	Rush	Pass	Pace
Dallas	396.2	143.7	252.5	24.6
Seattle	390.2	167.3	222.9	24.6
Tampa Bay	387.4	162.6	224.7	24.2
San Francisco	387.4	162.6	224.7	24.2
Detroit	370.2	105.6	264.6	21.7
Atlanta	368.2	139.1	229.1	23.0
L.A. Rams	365.6	94.2	271.4	25.4
Albany	365.2	142.2	223.0	24.2
New Orleans	364.1	107.3	256.8	21.7
Philadelphia	342.3	118.4	223.6	21.7
Green Bay	340.1	118.4	221.6	21.7
Archie	334.1	118.4	215.7	21.7
N.Y. Giants	316.7	95.4	221.3	21.7
Chicago	316.7	95.4	221.3	21.7
Washington	316.2	99.4	216.8	21.0
DEFENSE				
	Yards	Rush	Pass	Pace
San Francisco	250.9	116.7	134.2	22.2
Chicago	250.9	116.7	134.2	22.2
Dallas	321.6	106.4	215.2	21.7
New Orleans	321.6	106.4	215.2	21.7
L.A. Rams	321.7	104.2	227.5	21.7
Seattle	332.7	91.0	241.7	21.7
Minnesota	332.7	91.0	241.7	21.7
Tampa Bay	335.1	76.2	258.9	21.7
San Diego	335.1	76.2	258.9	21.7
Carolina	366.7	137.5	229.2	21.7
Atlanta	366.7	137.5	229.2	21.7
Seattle	368.9	95.6	269.3	21.7
N.Y. Giants	372.8	114.2	258.6	21.7
Green Bay	372.8	114.2	258.6	21.7
Detroit	389.1	118.0	280.1	21.7
San Diego	389.1	118.0	280.1	21.7

NFL

Hunt: Big tests await Bills over next 2 weeks

FROM BACK PAGE

the conference-leading Baltimore Ravens (10-2) coming to town Sunday, and Buffalo playing at New England (10-2) on Dec. 21.

Coach Sean McDermott on Monday promptly cooled talk of having any AFC East title aspirations by saying he's solely focused on the immediate challenge ahead and noting how the dynamic Lamar Jackson-led Ravens might well be the league's best team.

"They just can beat you in so many different ways," McDermott said of the Ravens, who have won eight straight and had outscored their previous five opponents by a combined margin of 202-62 before eking out a 20-17 win over San Francisco on Sunday. "I don't think there's really been a defense that's cracked the code to this point, so to speak."

And yet, McDermott appreciates the national attention the Bills are suddenly generating in having matched the team's best record through 12 games in 23 years.

The latest sign of respect came Sunday, when the NFL flexed Buffalo into its most prestigious TV spot by moving the Bills' game at Pittsburgh from a 1 p.m. start to prime time on Dec. 15. It will mark the first time Buffalo has played on Sunday night since a 56-10 loss to New England in 2007.

"We talk a lot about things being earned, and the guys have earned that. So, I don't think we shy away from that standpoint," McDermott said. "But we also know there's a lot of work ahead of us, a lot of runway to go yet."

Buffalo might still have much

to prove, especially considering how it built much of its record by taking advantage of a soft early season schedule.

The perception toward the Bills, however, is beginning to change based on the dominance they've shown in winning three straight.

Allen, selected seventh overall in the 2018 draft and 25 spots ahead of Jackson, is finding his rhythm. He's overseeing an offense that has combined for 1,204 yards and nine touchdowns — seven of them passing — in its past three.

The uptick in production coincides with coordinator Brian Daboll introducing a no-huddle dimension.

And Buffalo's defense has added a more attacking element that has led to 13 sacks in the past three games after managing just 22 in its first nine.

Bills players note there is also a difference between this year's team and the one that sneaked into the playoffs on the final day of the 2017 season by clinching the AFC's final wild-card berth only after Baltimore was eliminated by giving up a last-minute touchdown in a loss to Cincinnati.

"That was a whole different team," safety Micah Hyde recently said, noting how the roster was already in transition following the arrival of McDermott and general manager Brandon Beane earlier that year.

"It was kind of one of those seasons where we didn't know what to expect," said Hyde, one of 12 remaining holdovers. "I think going into this year, we expected to do something great. And that's still where our mindset is."



DAVID T. FOSTER III, THE CHARLOTTE OBSERVER/AP

Former Carolina Panthers coach Ron Rivera holds up a T-shirt at the end of a press conference Wednesday at Bank of America Stadium in Charlotte, N.C. The Panthers fired Rivera on Tuesday.

Rivera fired by Panthers with 4 games remaining

BY STEVE REED

Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Panthers owner David Tepper said he would have preferred to wait until after the season to make a coaching change.

Tepper ultimately decided he wanted to get a jumpstart on his search for a new coach, so he fired Ron Rivera, the franchise's winningest coach, on Tuesday with the Panthers (5-7) all but out of playoff contention following a four-game skid.

"I was informed of other teams doing different types of searches out there and I'm not going to start a search and not tell Ron Rivera," Tepper said Tuesday. "(He's) too good of a man, and I have great respect for Ron. He's a great human being and I'm not going to disrespect anybody like that, especially Ron Rivera."

Rivera said Wednesday that he doesn't believe his coaching career is over.

In his final news conference at Bank of America Stadium Rivera said he will take the next four weeks off but is eager to coach again next season.

"I do believe I will get another opportunity, and I will coach again," Rivera said.

The 57-year-old Rivera opened his news conference by adamantly defending his accomplishments in his nine seasons in Carolina. He took over a 2-14 team, won three straight NFC South titles and led the Panthers to the Super Bowl.

He leaves with a 73-61 record, more wins than any Panthers coach.

But Rivera was a coach with a defensive background, and Tepper said the NFL has implemented rules that favor the offense. The owner said that benefits teams with a head coach that has an offensive background.

"That's why you're having more people go that way," said Tepper, who bought the Panthers in 2018 and did not hire Rivera, who was already in place. "I think you have a lot of people on that side accepting the more modern processes."

Tepper has spoken repeatedly about his distaste for the "long-term mediocrity" that has plagued the organization.

Rivera said he believes the team's struggles the past two seasons are directly tied to quarterback



MIKE MCCARN/AP

Kyle Allen took over quarterbacking duties for Panthers starter Cam Newton after two games because of a foot issue that might require surgery.

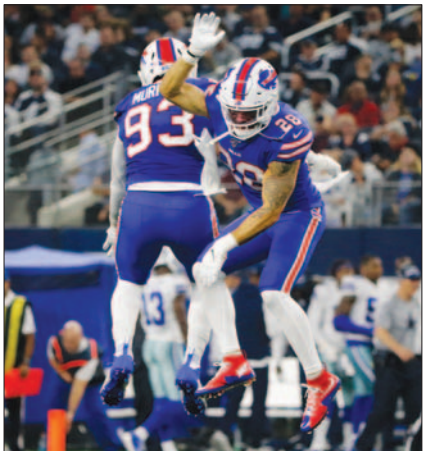
Cam Newton's injuries. Newton struggled through shoulder problems in the second half of last season and played only two games this season because of a foot issue that might require surgery.

"The biggest thing that contributed to our long-term mediocrity the last two seasons is that we didn't have our quarterback situation settled," Rivera said. "... Our problems didn't start until when? Until our quarterback got hurt."

Rivera said he was surprised Tepper fired him with four games left in the season.

"I thought, if anything, it'd happen at the end of the season... but at the end of the day you have to win football games," Rivera said.

For now, Perry Fewell will serve as Carolina's interim coach.



MICHAEL AINSWORTH/AP

At 9-3, the Bills have had a lot to celebrate this season.

SPORTS



CFP rankings

Buckeyes No. 1 heading into championship weekend » **Page 21**

NFL

Bill-ieve it!

Don't look now — Buffalo's in thick of playoff hunt

BY JOHN WAWROW
Associated Press

ORCHARD PARK, N.Y.

It was only a few weeks ago when the Bills had a 7-3 record, and quarterback Josh Allen acknowledged he and his teammates had taken a peek at the playoff picture.

"I wouldn't say we've started talking about it, but you do want to keep an eye on what everybody else is doing," the second-year starter responded, before making a cautious projection. "At the end of the day, I think you need at least 10 wins to get in."

Two weeks and two wins later, the question for Allen now might be why stop there?

Returning from an extended weekend off following their convincing 26-15 win at Dallas on Thanksgiving Day, the Bills are in the thick of the AFC playoff race.

At 9-3, the Bills will play the two teams ahead of them in the standings over the next three weeks, starting with

SEE HUNT ON PAGE 23



LYNNE SLADKY / AP

Buffalo fans, wearing Buffalo wings on their heads, cheer for the Bills during their Nov. 17 game against the Dolphins in Miami Gardens, Fla.



Bills quarterback Josh Allen celebrates a fourth-down conversion against the Cowboys on Thanksgiving.

ROGER STEINMAN / AP

No. 1 Louisville rolls past Michigan » College basketball, Page 19



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